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BY ROGER STARBUCK //

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OR,

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OR

THE SPOTTED CRUISER

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BY ROGER STATIONER

ATTORNEY AT LAW

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AND THE SPOTTED CRUISER

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SHADOW JACK.

CHAPTER I.

THE MUTINY.

THE American flag was hauled down—up went the MOORISH COLORS AT THE GAFF!

An insult to the STARS AND STRIPES!

Still worse, it happened aboard an American vessel!—the brig *Leopard*, of New London, Captain John Black.

This Black was a half-breed between an American and an Algerine; more than half his crew—sixty in number—were Portuguese Spaniards and Manilla Islanders; the rest were Nantucketers, Connecticut men, and strong, hardy fellows from the old Bay State.

As the dark flag went up, an ominous murmur, like suppressed thunder, rumbled through the brig.

It came from the long-limbed Nantucketers, from the gallant Connecticut lads, from the iron lungs of the Massachusetts men.

Forward stood all hands, the Americans glancing aft with knitted brows, while the dark-skinned foreigners showed their teeth more from surprise than anger.

All had shipped in the brig, understanding that she was bound on a trading voyage. A few days out their suspicions had been excited by the discovery of concealed guns in the hold. Now—six weeks later—behold the Moorish colors, flaunting at the mizzen.

“What is the meaning of this, sir?” demanded the second mate, Harry Marston, a fine-looking young man—Black’s adopted son, and a native of New London.

“Aft here, all hands!” roared Black, taking no notice of the question.

All hands came aft.

“Now, steward, my pistols!”

The steward brought the weapons.

"Men," said the captain, scowling, "I hope I will not be disobeyed."

There was no response.

"You all know," continued the skipper, "that, at the present time, the Mediterranean swarms with Algerine cruisers."

It was the year, 1814.

"Well, my lads, I have concluded that we can make a rich haul by joining them. You all know the Leopard's magnificent sailing qualities. Look at her now," he added, proudly.

She was well worth looking at: a trimmer craft never cut blue water. She was a brig, clipper-built, a remarkably fast sailer, which could run up almost into the wind's eye. The decks were clean, the ring-bolts polished like silver, the sails beautifully fashioned, and as white as the wings of the stately albatross.

"With such qualities, we can win plenty of prize-money from American vessels, and others. A large share of that money will I pay to you who are willing to join me. What do you say?"

There was a cheer from the dusky foreigners. The Americans stood silent, their lips compressed, their brows knitting heavier every moment. Then their simultaneous shout went thundering skyward:

"Never! never!"

The captain evidently had known beforehand that he could win the Portuguese and Islanders by bribery; therefore he merely smiled and went on:

"Such of you as are *not* willing to join me—and I see there are many—must make no trouble"—glancing at his pistols; "if you do, you must take the consequences. My intention is to set the dissatisfied adrift."

"Ay, ay, now; why bless my eyes! I ain't any thing but a shadder, ever since my wife Polly departed this 'ere life, but, blast me if I can put up with sich *imperitence*!"

The speaker was the third mate, Jack Thompson—SHADOW JACK, as he was familiarly termed, on account of his lean proportions, which, reflected on the deck, measured little more than the breadth of a good-sized shingle. He wore a huge glazed tarpaulin, pants of blue cloth, confined about the wasp-

like waist with a leather belt, and a sheath-knife with a blade almost as broad as himself.

"Silence!" screamed Black. "Another word, and my bullet cuts your brain!"

At this the "Shadow" sprung upon the rail, waved his tarpaulin high over his head, and shouted:

"Three cheers for the AMERICAN FLAG! Three groans for the ALGERINE RAG!"

"That 'ere's po'try," he added, quietly squinting at the pistol, which Black pointed at his head — "the po'try of a *shadder*!"

Marston grasped the captain's arm. "Forbear!" he said, sternly.

The skipper's face flushed angrily.

"I wish to have no trouble with any of you," he said, lowering his pistol. "I intend to set the whole of the dissatisfied men adrift on a raft."

Said Marston, firmly: "You intend to cruise *against* the Americans. I, sir, am an American, and deem it my duty to resist, and if possible to prevent, this treachery."

"Ah! mutiny? This way, my men!"

The traitors, breaking from the line, surrounded their captain, cheering.

He led them into the cabin, whence they soon reappeared, armed with guns, boarding-pikes, handspikes and crowbars.

Meanwhile Marston and his third mate had led his party into the hold to obtain axes, handspikes, and other implements.

Before they could regain the deck, the hatches were fastened over them.

Among those thus imprisoned was a little boy of six years Marston's son, whom he now conducted to a safe place in the forecastle.

"We are sartainly in a bad fix!" exclaimed Shadow Jack, pulling a whisky-flask from his pocket and taking a long draught. "My great regret, hows'ever, is, that that infarnal Moorish rag is at our gaff."

There was daring in Marston's eyes.

"IT SHALL NOT WAVE LONG!"

"IT SHALL NOT WAVE LONG!" echoed old Massachusetts.

Nantucket and Connecticut, although not one understood their leader's intention.

"IF THEY DO NOT OPEN TO US WE WILL FIRE THE SHIP AND ALL PERISH TOGETHER!"

"HOORAY! HOORAY!" screamed the patriots.

"This sooner than see our flag insulted!"

"Blast ye, I'll see about that!" shouted Black, from above

The bulkheads separating the cabin from the steerage hold were soon beaten down, when the muzzles of half a dozen muskets were pointed at the mutineers.

"The first man that strikes fire dies."

"Will you open the hatches to us or not?" shouted Marston.

"If you quietly leave the brig, yes; if not, NO!"

Marston sprung upon a cask. His voice went through the hold like ringing steel:

"The man who can leave the brig with **THE AMERICAN FLAG DOWN IS A COWARD!**"

"HOORAY!"

"I WILL FIRE THE BRIG!"

"At your peril!" from the cabin.

The cocks of the muskets clicked.

Marston sprung down and lighted a match which he took from his pocket.

"Bang!" went the muskets.

Three brave fellows fell; Marston remained uninjured.

He applied the lighted match to a bunch of dry oakum.

"Hold!" screamed Black. "I WILL OPEN!"

The fire was put out with a piece of canvas.

"Now, men!" howled the cunning captain.

Into the hold poured screaming Portuguese, Spaniards and Islanders.

"Make them all prisoners, or kill those who resist!"

The dusky foe pounced upon the Americans before another match could be lighted.

"This way, lads!" shouted Marston, knocking one of the Portuguese down with a sandspike, then pointing behind a row of casks further forward.

Thither retreated the party—Marston the last man to shield himself behind the barricade.

He had received a flesh wound in the arm from a Spaniard's knife: his blood was dripping.

The place behind the casks was clear of oakum or other inflammable substance: otherwise the martyrdom by fire would yet have been accomplished.

Meanwhile the dusky traitors, outnumbering the Americans, were reloading their muskets.

"Better give in!" exclaimed Black.

"NEVER TO TRAITORS!"

"No, by the beloved ghostess of that 'ere Poll of mine!" exclaimed Shadow Jack.

Marston now resorted to stratagem. Two or three of his men having just found axes, he sent them into the fore-castle to beat open the shutters.

"On deck, half a dozen of you!" ordered Black, "and stand by to dash out the brains of those men if they open the scuttle."

He was obeyed: thus his party was lessened.

Thump! thump! at the scuttle.

A quick, stern whisper from Marston was circulated from man to man of his little party.

Over the casks they leaped simultaneously, wielding their implements with such fury that their opponents slowly retreated, several of them dropping their muskets. These weapons strengthened the Americans.

Soon, however, the others having reloaded, and been reinforced by the six men whom Black had ordered to return, poured a volley into their antagonists. Luckily, owing to the darkness in the hold, their aim had been poor. The resistants were, however, forced back behind the casks.

As Marston had anticipated, his stratagem succeeded. The two men at the scuttle now had forced an opening.

"This way, lads!" shouted the young second mate.

Into the fore-castle, and up the fore-castle steps rushed the Americans, Harry carrying his little boy with him as he went.

Black, now perceiving his intentions, made a dash for the cabin with his men. Before he could reach the deck, the fore-castle scuttle and the companion-slide were fastened upon him!

He had fallen into the very trap which he had set for his opponents.

"Hooray!" exclaimed Shadow Jack, jumping upon the capstan, and waving his tarpaulin; "that 'ere was well done. Permit me, sir," he added, bowing to Marston, "to tender a shadder's respects to his captain."

He laughed, but grew suddenly solemn.

"Twenty long years ago," he sighed, "my Polly went to eternity—poor wife!"

It was his one great sorrow; and he took a long pull at the whisky-flask—his one great remedy for melancholy. Then he darted aft, and, jerking down the Moorish flag, hoisted the American colors in its stead!

Cheers followed this feat.

Meanwhile all was silent in the hold.

"Keep a good look-out, lads!" was Marston's order.

He went forward, and having deposited his son behind the windlass, loaded an old nine-pounder with slugs and iron.

The sun went down, the shadows of night gathered. Silence still in the hold!

Soon Marston fancied he could hear a faint noise as of a saw.

He examined all the hatches. The noise was not at these places; his look-outs there stood silent and watchful.

The disturbance had now ceased. Soon it recommenced.

"There's mystery about this 'ere," remarked Jack Thompson. "It's perfectly astonishin'."

He and Marston searched all over, but could not discover the source of the noise.

Buzz! buzz! buzz! Suddenly it again stopped.

"Tell you what I'll do," said Thompson. "I'll creep into the hold to find out what they're about. I ain't nothin' but a shadder; they can't see me very easy."

Marston did not like to risk the life of his best man in that way.

"I'll go," he said.

The Shadow, however, would not hear of that. So the second mate finally consented. Lifting the forecastle scuttle, it was found that the enemy was not in that quarter of the hold, and Thompson crept down the ladder.

Not a soul was in the fore-castle. Far aft a lantern shone dimly. Three or four figures were visible in that direction.

The Shadow, crouching, crawled toward them. He had not proceeded far, when a firm hand grasped his arm, a knife glittered above him!

"Who's that?" was sternly whispered.

"It does be me!" answered Jack, disguising his voice, and naming one of the Portuguese.

"All right; but don't go swooping along that way, if you don't want a knife in you!"

The Shadow moved on. When near enough to the cabin, he saw what was taking place.

A man with a saw was cutting away one of the dead-lights, making it large enough to admit a human body. Thompson perceived that the fellow had already nearly accomplished his purpose.

The Shadow was hurrying back toward the fore-castle, when a lantern was suddenly lighted and thrust into his face.

He was recognized!

Knowing this, he dashed the lantern into the bearer's face, springing right over his head, and sped on like a thin line. He was pursued. He had nearly gained the ladder, when strong arms clatched his pants—a knife was thrust into his leg!

It was only a flesh wound; so, jerking himself away, the adventurer hurried along. Just as he gained the scuttle, the legs of his pants were again grasped. Quickly explaining his situation to those above, Marston with a couple of men sprang into the fore-castle, to be confronted by half a dozen.

The young man grappled with a Spaniard; the latter was a stalwart fellow, and a desperate struggle ensued. Owing to his wounded arm, the second mate was soon thrown down. The Spaniard's knife was raised; other knives also gleamed. Marston and his companions were in the power of the six. Screams rung through the hold. There was also shouting and the trampling of feet on deck.

"Now, men, hurry up!" came the voice of Black.

The Spaniard above Marston made a lunge at him with his knife. The young man avoided it by rolling over. The

blade of the knife, sinking in the plank, was broken short off.

There was a groan near the young officer. It came from one of his companions, who had received a mortal blow from a dagger!

Marston desperately struggled to free himself. The Shadow, held down by two Manilla men, who had dropped their weapons, and were feeling for them in the dark, was doing the same.

Suddenly down the ladder came four men to their leader's assistance. The traitors then fled aft toward the cabin to join Black's party, half of whom had already succeeded in gaining a footing on deck through the open dead-light.

On deck rushed Marston, followed by his companions. His men stationed aft were preparing to fight the traitors, who were there getting ready to attack.

One of these fellows had succeeded in hauling down the American flag and again hoisting the Moorish colors!

"This way!" roared Marston.

Armed with such weapons as they had obtained, his party rallied round him.

"Once more," said Black, who had now gathered his whole band at his back, "I ask you to leave the brig. If you do so, my men shall lay down their arms, and let you go unmolested. Which is it? Fighting or leaving?"

Marston's reply was to spring aft and haul down the Moorish colors.

"Back!—at your peril!" cried Black, presenting his pistols at the young man's head.

The captain's men, who had been commanded to remain motionless until further orders, impatiently clicked the locks of their muskets, and flourished their other implements.

Marston eyed the captain a moment, and Black, evidently awed by the young man's fearless bearing, lowered his pistols. His men, amazed at the second mate's daring, did not fire upon him, and he proceeded to haul down the Moorish flag, which he seized and tore into two parts, and then trampled them beneath his feet.

This act aroused all the evil in Black's nature, and he deliberately leveled a pistol at Marston's head.

Jack, springing upon him, wrenched the weapon from his grasp.

A desperate struggle now ensued. The two parties threw themselves upon each other. Muskets were discharged, blows fell thick as rain, and many men dropped wounded, bleeding and dying.

In the thickest of the fight, Marston animated and encouraged his party, dealing his blows right and left with a power and dexterity which told severely on the traitor crew. But the villains were fully ten in the majority, and their leader was no coward.

They fought like demons, slowly driving back the Americans, who, however, disputed every inch of plank.

"Ay, ay, now!" exclaimed Jack Thompson; "if a shadder may venture an opinion, it seems to me that this 'ere fallin' back ought to be stopped."

"It shall!" cried Marston.

He gave one bound over the windlass, with an effort of sheer strength, whirled round toward his enemies the line-powder he had loaded, snatched a burning coal from the galley and applied it to the piece. So sudden, so unexpected was the act that Black and his men did not even mistrust their danger.

Crash!

The shot made a wide passage through the advancing gang. Appalled, they stood a moment undecided, watching their writhing companions, who had fallen beneath the murderous discharge.

"Now is our time!" came the bogle-voice of Marston.

"Now, lads, now!"

With a cry that rent the air like a thunderbolt, the Americans followed their gallant leader, bearing down upon their foes with the shock of an avalanche!

The traitors gave way before them! They were completely beaten by this sudden dash, and retreated—some taking refuge in the hold, others springing to the quarter-boat to lower it.

Before they could do so they were captured, and with the other traitors were brought to the main.

"What shall we do with them?" Marston remarked.

"Better set 'em adrift," suggested the Shadow. "They can go to Algiers, which isn't fifty miles to leeward."

Accordingly, the young sailor set the whole piratical gang adrift, in one of the brig's boats.

The next day he ran down for an American merchant-ship, seen in the distance, and transferred the wounded of the enemy aboard of her.

The merchantman was never heard of after she quitted the Mediterranean. She either foundered, or was captured by Algerine pirates, who, as mentioned, at that period infested the sea, preying upon all Christian vessels, especially upon those from the United States.

After disposing of his prisoners and wounded, Marston proceeded to bury the dead.

Among the latter was Captain Black. Before he breathed his last, he revealed to the young man something which he had hitherto carefully concealed from him. Exultingly he told the secret, which was this: that a few thousand dollars, left with Black for his *protégé* when he should come of age, had been appropriated by the captain.

For this reason Marston resolved to take possession of the Leopard, as part payment for what had been stolen from him, and with his own private property to fulfill a purpose which he had cherished ever since his childhood, of cruising against the detested Algerines. Calling the crew aft, he made them acquainted with all that had transpired, and avowed to them his intention.

"Hoopay! Marston forever!" shouted the men.

The "Shadow," leaping upon a gun, continued cheering long after his companions had stopped.

"That will do," said the young captain.

Thompson bowed, then burst into a fit of joyous laughter, which, however, he suddenly checked, looking as solemn as the grave.

"Twenty years ago, that 'ere wife of mine—my Polly, bless her eyes—went to eternity!"

Again the flask of whisky flew from his pocket, and a long draught seemed to restore the "Shadow" to his usual spirits.

"Up with the flag, Jack."

Bounding into the air with a whoop like a wild Indian, Thompson rushed into the cabin and brought up the full-dress American flag, which was kept safely stowed in the captain's bunk to be used only on great occasions.

"Haul!" was the order, and the Stars and Stripes shot up to the gaff!

CHAPTER II.

RETROSPECTIVE.

MARSTON had good reason to hate the Moorish flag.

Years before, his parents had been captured by Algerine pirates, to be scourged and killed in slavery. Subsequently while serving in a small sloop-of-war, the young man having drifted by accident from the vessel in a boat, had been picked up by a Moorish cruiser, and after being beaten almost to death, had been sold as a slave to José Costello, a Moorish sea-captain. This captain had a daughter, Dona Inez, then a girl of seventeen. Her dark eyes were like stars; her long, black hair, when unbound, hung almost to her feet; her smile was as radiant as an oriental sunrise; her movements were as graceful as the swaying of her own native waves.

Marston was a fine, handsome fellow, full of intelligence, and as kind as he was brave. Inez, like a true woman, pitied and loved "the Infidel": and having thus far opened her heart to generous emotions, she resolved to connive at his escape.

A vessel then was lying in the harbor, under command of a Turco-Frenchman, bound to Marseilles. The beautiful girl easily bribed this man to come at night to the landing in his boat, just before he should be ready for sailing. It was the time that Marston would be sent to the landing with a burden of clothing, freshly washed, for her father's crew. The young man was then informed of the plan arranged; he was to throw away his burden, knock down the Moorish sailor who would accompany him, and jump into the boat.

The plan succeeded: Marston was pulled aboard the French-Moor's vessel.

Although free once more, the grateful American was not happy at thought of abandoning the Moorish maid—the gazelle-eyed Inez—whose beauty, goodness and intelligence had strangely impressed him. He stood by the rail, mournfully watching the receding shores, when he felt a light touch on his arm, and turning, beheld the object of his thoughts!

There she stood, in all her glorious beauty, her long hair waving, her eyes full of tenderness and joy.

Harry was speechless with astonishment.

"You are not angry?" she said.

Having traveled to foreign parts in her father's vessel, the quick-witted child had learned to speak both French and English with considerable fluency, while her association with Harry and other captives had materially perfected her knowledge of English speech.

"Angry?" answered Marston. "God bless you, sweet girl, no! I am very happy!"

She clapped her hands.

"I will go with you?"

"Where?"

"Anywhere—everywhere—follow you to the end of the earth!" she answered, blushing.

Harry was sobered in a moment. What a charge was here! But his heart would swell and bound within his breast, and the warm blood would mount to his temples. In that one moment he lived a year—he loved, and his heart it was that spoke:

"Will you be my wife?"

Her eyes beamed happiness too deep for utterance. Her lips tried to syllable "Yes!"

The vessel soon arrived at Marseilles; thence Marston, shipping in a New-London craft, worked the homeward passage of Inez and himself.

Arrived at New London, he brought the girl to his foster-home. Here he had lived from the moment his parents had departed on their ill-fated voyage. They had gone to France to take possession of some money, bequeathed to them by a relative, leaving Harry in charge of Black's brother William

—an old friend and a kind-hearted man. He died while the Marstons were absent, when John Black took charge of the child, resolving to bring him up to the sea.

The moment Harry returned home with his beautiful companion, John Black fell in love with her; but her undisguised affection for Harry ending in their early marriage, Black was baffled in his quickly-formed purpose to make her his wife. This marriage only aroused the slumbering devil of his nature, and his resolve to obtain Inez, by any means, soon became a fixed purpose.

As a first step in the scheme, he persuaded Harry to ship in his vessel—the Leopard—fully intending to make way with him: to either lose him overboard, or put him in the power of the Algerines.

Marston's wife had presented her husband with a son, now grown to a bright boy of eight years. The child's health failing, it was thought that a winter passed in a warmer latitude would benefit the little one. Harry at once arranged for a cruise in the Mediterranean, taking the child with him.

Inez grieved deeply over the proposed separation.

"It will only be for a few months," said the fond husband, "and then little Harry will be restored to you, safe and sound."

"Ay, ay, ma'am," said Shadow Jack, who was present on this occasion; "if a shadder may be so bold, I would suggest that 'ere as the best possible thing. There'll be Harry and me to look out for the little creatur', who will come back as plump and rosy as a ball of red clay."

We will not delay the melancholy parting. Inez remained aboard the Leopard until the last moment: then only with the greatest difficulty could she tear herself away and enter the boat destined to carry her back to New London.

Away went the Leopard, booming seaward before the land-breeze under a press of canvas, which soon carried her far along upon her course. She was a brig, clipper-built, a remarkably fast sailer, which could run almost into the wind's eye. Both Marston and Jack Thompson—the latter had been shipped as third mate—looked round them admiringly at the clean white decks, the polished ring-belts, tapering spars, and snow-white set of new sails.

"Just such a vessel as this," thought Harry, "I have often dreamed of, to cruise in against the Algerines."

Marston, having conducted his little son below, went forward to take a good view of the Leopard's crew—all hands being on deck. There were sixty men in all—a large number, it seemed to the second mate, for so small a craft, which might easily have been worked by half of them. Soon, the Shadow appearing, drew his friend to one side.

"A pretty rough set," he remarked. "Some of 'em look as if they had sarved a term, beggin' your pardon, in t'other regions below."

"Never mind," said Marston, "I trust we will have a successful voyage, and come home well off."

An hour later, head-winds came up, when the captain was obliged to tack. The wind soon increased to a heavy gale, driving the craft back toward the harbor. Before light she was standing off and on the New London shore.

"There's a boat coming aboard!" cried the man on the look-out.

The boat, containing a female, rapidly approaching, soon was alongside. The shadows of twilight rendered its occupant indistinct, until the woman was helped aboard, when she was recognized as Mrs. Marston.

"Inez!" exclaimed Harry, darting to her side, and winning his arms around her.

"Ah, my own!" she exclaimed, pressing his cheek to her shoulder—"do not send me back again—do not. I *can not* live apart from you and my child."

So saying, she caught up the little one and kissed it.

"Inez, I am sorry, but the peril—"

"I care not for it, while I am with you."

"The hardships, too—"

"Will seem light, so long as I am by your side!"

"It would not do for you to go," he said, kissing her.

"Sacrifices must sometimes be made in this world—"

She interrupted him, softly: "You are my world: I have no other!"

"I mean the world at large, and—"

"There can be no world to me without you! All would be darkness!"

Her dark eyes, her glorious smile were upon him. The other officers, having retreated from the quarter-deck, Marston drew his wife closely to his heart.

"My own Ilez! would that I deemed it safe for you to go, I could no longer refuse; but I feel that there would be a great deal of trouble."

She perceived that she had weakened his resolution, through his love for her, and her heart beat for joy. One more stroke and she would triumph!

She knew that in the eyes of her husband she was beautiful; that the power of her beauty over him was great, and she now resolved to exert that power. The knowledge that she could exert it gave a richer glow to her cheek, and made her dark orbs shine like stars. She put down the child, she unlocked her long hair and flung it back over her shoulders, with that grace natural to her people. Then she advanced to her husband's side, and clasping his neck with both white arms, looked up.

The great luminous eyes, looking down into Harry's very soul, made him thrill with pride at possessing so matchless a wife. There was a mischievous light in those eyes, which added ten-fold to her loveliness. She was reading her power, and as she read it, she smiled gloriously and tapped the deck with her little feet.

"You shall go!" exclaimed Marston. "I see that I could not bear to be separated from you!"

She uttered a cry of delight and clapped her hands, joyfully.

Marston had stepped to the captain's side and informed him that he should take his wife with him.

Black frowned, then reflecting a moment, said he had no objection to urge, although he thought it would have been best to have left Mrs. Marston ashore.

Ilez now was a happy woman.

Next morning—the wind having hauled fair at midnight—the *Leopard* was well out to sea.

A month later, just at moonlight, a squall pounced upon her, driving her through the water upon her beam-ends, with every thing humming. It struck the vessel unexpectedly, tearing her upper sails as if they were so much paper, and rend-

ing the topsail sheets, causing the canvas to flap about with the din of thunder.

Harry Marston was at this time in a boat astern, repairing some slight damage about the cabin windows. The moment the squall struck the vessel he grasped the boat-warp to draw himself alongside. As he did so, he saw a dark figure above him, bending over as if to assist him; an instant later he perceived that he was adrift, the warp having evidently been cut by a knife!

Clapping his hand to his mouth he shouted with all his might; but as the brig, now shooting ahead like an arrow, was out of sight in the darkness and the storm-rack, he doubted that was heard.

Nevertheless, his shout *had* been heard by one person aboard; his wife, who, seated in the cabin, had been watching her husband while he worked. Quickly she rushed on deck, just in time to see the captain dart past her with an exultant gleam in his eyes.

"My husband is adrift! Save him! save him!" she shrieked, in a voice which was heard through the whole craft.

"No use!" said the captain. "No boat could live in such a blow!"

He, however, now gave orders to huf up as much as possible; then told his mate to lower the quarter-boat.

"Captain," answered the latter, his face of a deathlike paleness, "I would not venture in *any* boat at such a time."

"You see, Inez!" said the captain, "that—"

"**LOWER THE BOAT!**" she cried, in a voice that thrilled every hearer, like a magnetic stroke. "**Lower the boat and I will STEER IT!**"

When a child she had been used occasionally to plying one of her father's light boats along the coast.

"You would be lost, Inez!"

"Down with the boat!" she cried, stamping her little feet. "**I tell you I will manage it!**"

Her black, unbound locks were waving wildly round her shoulders; her eyes shone like meteors.

"Ay, ay, lower it!" exclaimed Jack Thompson. "I for one will help to man the craft! We will save the mate, or die in the attempt! What say, lads?"

"AY, AY, MARSTON FOREVER!" shouted half a dozen voices. The captain ground his teeth. "Lower the boat!" he said.

This was done; down went the boat, and into it, before any person could prevent her, sprung the devoted wife, fearful that the mate might yet persuade the men not to go after her husband.

The graceful ease with which she dropped into the boat, light as a feather, excited admiration.

After her came Jack Thompson; but before any of his shipmates could imitate his example, a huge sea rolling along, turned the boat so far over that Inez was spilt out between it and the brig!

A faint cry broke from her lips; the next moment she was pulled in the boat by Jack Thompson.

"Are you hurt, ma'am?" he inquired.

"No," she answered, faintly. "Not much. There! take your place while I steer!" she added, as the boat now drifted away from the brig.

The jerk given to it by the sea had parted the warp.

"We're sartinly in a dangerous kind of a situation, now, ma'am!" said Thompson, "if a shadder may be so bold as to express an opinion. Two in a boat only—"

"Take your oars and work the boat as well as you can!" interrupted Inez, as she brought the head of the little vessel before the seas. They were now rolling along swift as shot before the shrieking gale, and the boat fairly seemed to fly upon its course.

"Do you see any thing, yet?" Inez inquired.

"No, ma'am, but then you know I'm nothin' but a shadder, after all, so that my eyesight can't be as good as that of t'other folks!"

As he spoke he rose, and peering anxiously ahead, he thought he could make out some dark object tossed along upon the crest of a huge, rolling billow.

"I ain't sure, ma'am, but I think I see him now!"

Inez uttered a cry of joy.

"Harry! husband!" she exclaimed, "are you there?"

Her voice went right through the storm like the note of a silver-trumpet, but there came no response.

Soon, however, a faint cry was heard: "Aho! aho!"

"Hooray! hooray!" screamed the Shadow. "Where are you?"

"Here, clinging to the bottom of the boat!" was the answer.

The vessel in which were the two adventurers, now was close upon the dark object ahead.

"Stand by!" screamed Thompson. "Here we are!"

He saw right ahead of him, the overturned boat, and thought he could make out a head right above it!

By this time the squall had passed to leeward, and the wind was blowing moderately, although there still was a rough sea. Inez kept the boat along steady, while Thompson, leaning over, stood by to grasp the second mate. Soon the boat was alongside the overturned one.

"Now!" cried Inez—"now, thank God!"

Thompson staggered back with a groan.

"There is nobody there!" he said.

Up rose the young wife, her black eyes gleaming wildly.

"Husband—Harry, oh, where are you?"

Her voice was like the voice of a wounded bird: the phosphor-light of the sea showed her face whiter than the foam.

"It is he!" screamed the wife, grasping that hand firmly.

An instant after, Marston was in the boat, clasped to his wife's bosom. She fell heavily against his shoulder; he looked down into her closed eyes, and perceived that she was senseless.

"Ay, ay!" exclaimed Thompson; "I thought she must be hurt by that jamming between the boat and the brig when she fell out. But she wouldn't own it, do you see, until she made sure of savin' you."

"Inez! Inez!" groaned Marston, showering kisses upon the pale face—"speak to me!"

She, however, answered not, and her dress now having become partially disarranged around the throat, her husband perceived that she had been badly bruised.

Meanwhile the subsiding of the squall enabled Captain Black to wear ship, and the two men in the boat beheld the brig's lantern approaching.

Soon after they were aboard, when Mrs. Marston was conveyed into the cabin. She recovered, but it was evident that she suffered much pain.

"This is too bad!" said her husband, hoarsely. "Why, Inez, did you venture in the boat?"

"Never mind," she answered, winding her arms around his neck. "I do not mind the pain while *you* are with me. I was afraid nobody would go to your rescue, if I did not set the example."

Three weeks later the brig was lying off and on Fajal, Western Island.

Inez was ill, having only partially recovered from the injuries she had sustained. For this reason, Marston could no longer bear the thought of subjecting her to the hardships which, from shipwreck or other accidents, often happening at sea, she might have to endure. She begged hard to be permitted to go with him, but he was firm. He had overheard, between the captain and mate, certain remarks which in his mind foreshadowed great troubles aboard the brig. Under such circumstances it were a thousand times better that Inez should not be aboard.

Accordingly the young wife, for the second time, parted from her husband and child, to take passage for home in a small bark bound for New London. The separation grieved Inez beyond expression, and as to her husband, it seemed to him that the light itself had gone when she left the brig. He would not now have refused her their child, if she had been willing to take it home with her; but the little one was improving so much in health, that the mother, although it cost her a terrible effort to tear herself away from them, was too unselfish to carry him back, especially as the boy himself said that he preferred to continue at sea awhile with his papa.

The wind being fair, the captain now stood away from the Western Islands under all the sail he could carry.

As the vessel, under a fair wind, drew near the straits, it was noticed that the Portuguese first mate and captain often remained closeted together for hours.

"There's plottin'," Thompson remarked to Marston, one day, as the two stood an' ships. "A shadder can't expect

to be pleased like t'other folk, but I must say I don't like them sort of conferences."

As has been shown, his surmise proved correct. The two men were plotting to carry the Leopard and her crew into the Algerine service.

CHAPTER III.

THE LETTER.

A FEW months after Marston had come into possession of the Leopard, Inez received from her husband a strange letter, brought by a merchant-vessel—a letter which stated that he should not be back as soon as he expected—perhaps not for *a year or two*, but bidding her keep up a good heart, as all would prove for the best. Little Harry was well, he added, and would be so improved on his return that his mother would not know him.

A week after, there was a knock at Inez' door, which being opened, disclosed the form of a rough-looking sailor.

"Is this Mrs. Marston?"

She answered "Yes," when the sailor continued:

"A sad bizness—a sad piece of news for ye, ma'am."

She dropped into a chair, as pale as death.

"For heaven's sake!" she gasped, fearing that either her husband or her boy had been killed, "tell me what is the matter?"

"Ay, ay, ma'am; the matter is jist this: that your husband, with many others, rose in mutiny aboard the Leopard, *and killing the captain and mate, took possession of the vessel!*"

"Impossible!" exclaimed Inez; "he could never have done that."

"It is true, ma'am."

The wife shuddered, but with flashing eyes, declared that she believed it was a slander. She knew her Harry too well to credit such a report.

"Well, p'raps you'll get convinced, after a while," replied the sailor, and took his departure.

On the next day the story of the mutiny was all over New London. A merchant-ship had seen the Leopard, bowling along to windward just before leaving the Mediterranean. She had, soon after, picked up a boat's crew, who, giving the story, stated that they had deserted to escape the mutineers. It is needless to add, that the man who had visited Inez, above, was one of the boat's crew.

As the news circulated, many old people, shaking their heads, said that although Marston had always seemed to conduct himself well enough, there was about him a certain dare-devil air, which had made them predict that he would never "come to any good."

It was doubtless the ill-feeling he bore the Moors, on account of the fate of his parents, together with the extreme beauty and splendid sailing-qualities of the Leopard, which had tempted him to murder her captain and make himself master of the craft.

Now, although Inez had often been startled by a certain moroseness of manner about her husband, whenever an Algerine was spoken of; although threats of vengeance against them had often escaped him, yet the young wife contradicted the gloomy report of the mutiny, whenever she heard it.

Still, that *something* strange had happened was evident, and her anxiety on account of Marston and her boy was upon her day by day, stealing the roundness from her cheek and the brilliancy from her soft, dark eyes.

People said that she would not live long if she did not soon hear news from the departed ones.

At length her wish was gratified. A merchant-bark from the Mediterranean came into port, bringing her this letter from her husband:

"DEAREST INEZ:—I hasten to take advantage of this opportunity to inform you that both little Harry and myself are well. I send you money," (there was a hundred-dollar note in the letter,) "which I have taken, among other things, from the Algerines. Yes, darling wife, my hopes are at last realized. I am in command of the Leopard—as fine a craft as ever sailed—and am cruising against my hated enemies, who I flatter myself, have already suffered considerably from my blows. I am aware—"

* * * *

Unfortunately the rest of the letter was unintelligible, the ship's mail-bag, by an accident, having been so saturated with salt water as to render the entire letter almost a loss.

A prey to inconceivable anguish, Inez vainly endeavored to remove the stains, so as to read the writing. Her husband had stated that he was in command of the *Leopard*. Was it, then, true that he had committed mutiny? If not, how had he come into possession of the vessel?

She went to the captain of the merchant-bark, hoping that Marston had said something to that man which would reassure her. But no—the captain stated that the *Leopard's* commander had, after boarding him, remained but a minute, during which only a few trifling words had been exchanged.

As weeks passed on, however, the exploits of the cruising *Leopard* rung upon every tongue. The vessel would pounce upon all Algerine pirates, capturing and burning their vessels—killing in combat many of their crews. The wild Moorish and Arab sailors feared this craft, as they did the terrible si-moom of the Great Desert. They fled before it like hunted deer, and the dey had fitted out two Algerine men-of-war to hunt it down. The vessel was easily known by its singular appearance, for, in order to strike greater terror to the hearts of the fanciful Moors, Marston had painted WHITE SPOTS all over the hull, so that it resembled the animal whose name it bore, and for that reason received among its awe-stricken enemies the name of the WINGED LEOPARD.

Now, although, by thus pouncing upon the Algerines, the captain served his own country as well as other Christian nations—although he had rescued several American merchantmen from the jaws of the pirates—still, the fact of his having committed mutiny would of course render him liable to the usual punishment for that crime.

About this time a New London captain, Richard Stockton, who had been a midshipman under Decatur, was, with the permission of Government, fitting out a vessel—a privateer sloop—destined to join his old commander's squadron, now getting ready to cruise in the Mediterranean against the Algerines, and to bring the dey of Algiers to terms.

The captain, when all ready for sea, and only waiting for

Decatur, received orders to sail at once, in advance of the squadron, to capture the mutineer's vessel—the LEOPARD.

Mrs. Marston, hearing of this, instantly made up her mind that she would go aboard that vessel to sea! Yes, she would be present at her husband's capture, and would also be near him to console him with her presence while he was a prisoner.

Her application to Stockton was not successful. He pictured to himself the agony of the wife if her husband, offering resistance, should be killed or wounded, and so could not bear to take her with him. Knowing, however, that the captain's wife would go with him, Inez, with ready wit, applied to *her*. As she had predicted, she here found an ally. Mrs. Stockton—a noble creature—was one of those devoted women who could really sympathize with one so much like her in that respect. She at once informed Inez that she should go, and she kept her word. The captain, easily persuaded by his loving wife, consented to receive Mrs. Marston aboard.

The vessel—the Cormorant by name—sailed in a clear morning in March, 1815. As she continued on her course with fair winds, Mrs. Stockton was almost constantly by Inez's side, endeavoring to animate her spirits. Having full faith in a wife's intuitive knowledge of her husband, she, in spite of the captain's firm belief to the contrary, was rather inclined to take Inez' view of the case, that Marston was innocent.

In due time the sloop reached the Mediterranean, when she shortened sail for her cruise, and had look-outs constantly aloft. She was an excellent sailer, and carried nineteen guns—qualities which would render her a formidable adversary for many of the small Algerine craft.

One morning a leather vessel—Stockton could tell her by the peculiar "shoulder-climber" shape of her mainsail—was seen to hew a-hull, chase a, and finally boarded. She proved to be a trader, loaded with figs and other fruit, bound to Constantinople.

The captain could speak a little English, and on being questioned as to whether he had lately seen any thing of a cruiser called the Leopard, the fellow started, trembling in every limb.

"By the Great Prophet, no!" he answered, "and I am glad

of it. The Winged Leopard is no mortal craft. It is commanded by a demon!"

Stockton smiled, declaring that if he could sight the vessel he would soon prove that her captain was no demon.

CHAPTER IV.

CRUISING.

THE captain now dismissed the Algerine, after taking a man to act as an interpreter, and bracing forward his yards, kept upon his course.

The vessel he was after—the Leopard—was at this moment about three leagues ahead, standing along upon a course which soon must bring her in sight of the privateer.

Captain Marston, with his little boy, stood upon the quarter-deck, sweeping the ocean with his glass. Browed and weather-beaten, he looked somewhat older, but was the same fine, manly fellow as ever, while his son was much improved by the voyage. His cheeks glowed with health, and his dark eyes were full of light and spirit.

The captain was about stooping to kiss the lad, when his first lieutenant, who was none other than Jack Thompson, suddenly came shooting down from aloft by means of a backstay.

He was still as much of a shadow as ever; his uniform fitted tightly round his slim proportions, so that, with his huge gold-banded cap, he bore some resemblance to a tall stool. He had sworn eternal gratitude to Marston for promoting him, declaring that it was one of the most remarkable things in the world for a mere "shad-ler" to be made a first lieutenant. Two such men as Marston and he kept the little cruiser as neat and trim as a coquette. Her decks were scoured to a virgin whiteness, her rigging taut and in good order, her paint always clean. She was a remarkably fast sailer, and to see her running along at a distance, covered with her white spots the resemblance of her hull to a leopard

was certainly striking, and gave her a strange, weird appearance, well calculated to strike with terror the wild fancy of Moor or Arab. She mounted ten guns in all: four nine-pounders forward, two tens amidships, and four of the same caliber aft; her crew consisted of thirty men, half of whom were newly-shipped hands from the Italian coast. They were all a hardy set of fellows, much attached to their captain, who generally shared with them whatever prize-money he obtained.

"Did you see any thing while aloft, Jack?" inquired the captain.

"Ay, ay, sir, a sail about four miles to leeward; think she's an Algerine, but am not sure."

Instantly the captain ordered the vessel kept off.

"You are not going to chase?"

"Ay, ay."

"If you'll take the advice of a *shadder* you won't. That craft is heading along toward the straits; we may fall in with men-of-war in that direction."

"We can show our heels then," answered Marston, coolly.

"I like your grit, captain," said the "Shadow," leaning back and laughing heartily; "it pleases me—it certainly does!"

Suddenly he stopped laughing and sighed heavily, "Poor Polly!" then seemed to fall into a fit of musing.

"Well, Thompson, what are you thinking about now?"

"If a shadder may be so inquisitive," said Jack, "what's your opinion about second wives—about getting married twice?"

"Ho! ho! So you want another wife?"

The "Shadow" blushed, and drew himself away behind the potato-bin to hide his confusion.

"Aloft, there!" shouted Marston, hailing the man aloft at the main, "how is that sail heading now?"

"Away from us—about south by east. She has crowded all sail."

As soon as possible, Marston did the same, and soon, rapidly gaining on the Algerine, he discovered her to be a schooner carrying eight guns.

The Leopard was rushing merrily along, with the foam

flying over both bows, when a fog rising, curtained the fugitive from sight. Night also closed, so that it was not until daylight that he caught another view of the Algerine. She now was about a league to leeward, while ahead of her was a small American merchant brig, of which she evidently was in chase. The little brig had crowded all the canvas she could bear, and was bowling along at a tremendous rate, with her lee main yard-arm touching the water.

Ten minutes after, bang! went one of the Leopard's bow guns, sending a shot right through the Algerine's hull.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Thompson, jumping upon a cannonade slide, and waving his hat around his head.

The enemy, now perceiving that she had no time for plunder, kept off from the merchantman, and crowding additional sail, shot away as if a demon were after her.

Marston was about giving orders to set topgallant sailing-sails, when Thompson, laying a hand on his shoulder, pointed to windward.

Glancing in that quarter, the captain noticed that the air was there darkened by a strange-looking, far-extending, yellowish mass, resembling a cloud of vapor.

Beneath this mass the water was churned to foam, while the spray flew up so high that it seemed to sweep the very heavens. Rolling higher and higher, the strange cloud finally passed over the sun, which thus was rendered of a blood-red hue, and seemed to roll round and round. A strange rushing noise, as of millions of unseen wings passing through the air, now was heard.

"In with royal and top-gallant sails!" howled Marston. "Clew up topsails!"

Away went the blue-jackets to obey. Swarming over the decks and aloft they soon had shortened sail.

Not a moment too soon; for now, with a humming, buzzing, whizzing sound, the ship went over upon her beam-ends, as the dun-colored cloud enveloped her. Then down upon her decks rushed whole showers of sand, almost blinding the vision of the seamen and cutting their faces, as the fine particles were whirled upon them.

As far as the eye could see, this sand-cloud was in the air, swept from the Great Desert, thousands of miles distant.

Thicker and thicker it became every moment, so that the sailors breathed with difficulty, some of them being obliged to throw themselves flat upon the deck to avoid choking. Meanwhile the Leopard now tore along through the mass of rolling, seething waters, with every thing cracking and humming, and the spray flying almost to her trucks, while her decks were continually deluged by the incoming seas.

High over the heads of the sailors a continuous rumbling, cracking sound, as if the air were full of electricity, was perceptible, while sea and sky were lighted by fiery rings and circles, that threw a strange glare upon the faces of the men.

At times it seemed as if the little craft, booming along with leaping keel, was lifted clean out of the water and thrown up among the careering clouds. Then again down she would come, rolling far over upon her beam-ends, so that her topsail fairly touched. The main-topsail, the foresail, and the mainsail were torn from their gaskets, and before the crew, half-coked by the sand, could lay up to furl them, they were in tatters and whirled out of sight. Soon the upper sails were also blown clear off their gaskets, and the sheets parting, were seen whipping about all over the craft, beating thunder against the yards and masts. The close-reefed foresail, parting its sheet, was slatting furiously, threatening to carry away the yard, when a thin aspen-like figure was seen darting through the hissing spray and whirling sand.

It was the "St. Glow," who, running up the shrouds, flew out upon the yard and caught the sheet with both hands. Then lowering himself to the deck with it, at the imminent peril of his life—for as he descended he was slatted and shot violently higher and thicker—he secured the end round the pin and soon made it fast.

"Well done, Thompson!" howled Marston, through his trumpet.

"Ay, ay! Well enough for a 'shatterer,'" answered Thompson. "These 'ere proportions of mine is mighty convenient, do you see, in such cases! No danger for a poor wasted mortal like me, and little loss if I should go to 'jine that 'ere departed of mine."

A moment later, his weird shriek was heard, splitting the storm in two.

"Right ahead, about a quarter of a mile off!"

"What—the Algerine?"

"Ay, ay, with both bulwarks stoven, and only the stump of her mainmast standing!"

"Keep off a little at the wheel!" ordered Marston.

"Ay, ay, sir!" answered the helmsman, "but I can't see very well where I'm going, on account of the sand!"

"We'll have our prize, lads, when the gale abates," said the captain. "She can't escape us!"

At this the crew of the Leopard took off their hats and gave three cheers.

Just then there was a blinding flash of lightning, followed by a crash as if a hundred bolts had fallen.

Glass in hand, up went Marston, springing into the shrouds, and mounting to the main-yard.

Just as he was about to level the instrument a long column of lurid fire shot up from the Algerine. A moment she was enveloped in a shower of sparks, then with a report like the bursting of a volcano, every vestige of the vessel suddenly vanished!

Struck by lightning, she had blown up, thus cheating the Leopard of its prey!

When he had arrived about where the vessel had disappeared, Marston looked around him, keenly, to see if there were a vestige of the craft or her crew remaining; but he looked in vain—all had gone! By this time the sand-cloud had passed some distance to leeward, and the gale showed signs of abating. Before noon, Marston, busy repairing damages, was becalmed. The sea, with the exception of that long, undulating swell which never entirely leaves it, lay as smooth as marble, and the sun shone with unclouded splendor.

Working with energy, the men had bent a new topsail on to the yard, and were hoisting out some more canvas, when the man on the look-out was seen leaning far forward.

"Sail, 'O!"

"Whereaway?"

"Two points off the lee-bow, about three miles off!"

Up went Marston, and surveyed the stranger. She lay with her stern toward him, so that he was unable to make

out her exact size, but he could perceive that the Moorish flag was at her mizzen.

"Bear a hand, lads!" cried the captain, when he descended. "We may have a prize before night!"

The men cheered, while the "Shadow," as usual, leaned back, laughing heartily. Suddenly he showed a grim face and struck his head violently against the rail.

"What's the matter, Jack?"

"Ay, ay, it's no use; the mem'ry of that 'ere will come in spite of me!" And he butted the rail again.

Then taking his flask from his pocket he took a long draught.

"Poor Pelly!" he said, smacking his lips.

Watching the craft ahead, the crew soon perceived that she was clipping all sail on, as if anxious to escape. She still lay stern on, so that her size could not be determined.

"She looks wonderful like an American craft!" said Thompson. "Shouldn't wonder if she's a captured vessel!"

Marston also was of this opinion. He watched the vessel steadily through his glass, and finally saw her broadside partially swing round, but could perceive no ports.

"She is an Algerine merchant vessel," he said, "and will afford us good pickings!"

A breeze soon sprung up, when, as if anxious to escape, the stranger crowded all sail.

Soon, being in range, Marston ran out one of his low-guns, and fired a nine-pound shot. It was well aimed, cutting away the Moorish flag, and knocking a huge splinter from the mizzen-topmast. The Leopard gradually gained, but as darkness now was closing, Marston had little hope of effecting the capture that day.

He now was near enough to the fugitive craft to detect something large and black, bobbing up and down right astern of her, and which seemed to follow in her wake. All hands saw it, but none were able to make out what it was.

Soon darkness veiled the mysterious object from sight.

When daylight came, the fugitive was seen about four miles to leeward.

Marston, still under everything he could carry, went thundering along after her, and gaining fast, soon was within range.

While he was trying to read her name, the vessel, to the surprise of all hands, suddenly came round, **MAKING STRAIGHT FOR THE LEOPARD!**

At the same moment a tarpanlin, which, cunningly arranged along her sides, had hitherto concealed them, was lifted, disclosing her port-holes, twenty-five in number, through which frowned two rows of formidable looking guns.

"Duped!" exclaimed the captain. "The *Algerine* is sloop-of-war."

As for Thompson he jumped up, about five feet, and came down, slapping his knee-joints.

"In all my experience as a shadler, I never saw any thing to equal this!"

"Wear ship!" thundered Marston, who must now "show his heels;" and round came the little *Leopard*, shooting off on the other tack.

Bang! from the sloop-of-war, and a shot went whizzing over the length of the *Leopard's* deck, passing right between the Shadow and his superior. But for Thompson's lean proportions the missile must have gone through his body.

Bang! from the stranger again, and this time the fire-iron-box flew into splinters, leaving the compass and the helmsman uninjured.

The wind was now blowing almost a gale, and both vessels lay well over, as they tore through the rushing waters. The pursuing craft was a swift sailer, and her speed kept her zig-zagging round the *Leopard*, now and then inflicting some slight damage in her hull and rigging. The shadowed craft, however, made the best time, slowly lengthening the distance between her and the fugitive.

"Now, then," quoth Marston, when nearly a league from his pursuer, "out with a couple of those tarpanlins and see what we can do for a putting scare."

The gunners, grinning exultingly, pointed their pieces: there was a deafening crash, and, as the smoke cleared, the stranger's foretop-gallant mast was seen to go by the board.

"Hooray! hooray!" screamed Thompson, jumping upon the round-house.

The crew echoed the cheer, when a ten-pound shot from

the other vessel came howling along, shooting away the jib-sheet, and passing right through Thompson's tarpaulin, thence downward, ripping a seam out of his jacket sleeve.

"There's some advantage in being a shudder, after all," he cried, "soon as them kind is hard to hit." He leaned back, laughing heartily; then passed, making a wry face. "Years ago that here Polly of mine went to the realms of eternity."

Before night the pursuing vessel was half-down astern. When darkness came, Marston, bracing his yards up smart, edged off to windward, hoping thus to escape her.

Next morning there was a light fog.

"Guess we've cleared the rascal!" exclaimed the Shadow, exultingly.

As he spoke, however, an ominous noise was heard; the creaking of yards and blocks right ahead. The next moment the dark outlines of a vessel loomed through the mist, at her muzzle-head the Moorish flag.

"Down men, into the hold!" cried Marston, in a voice that was almost a whisper.

"Now, Jack, up with the Algerine flag."

The Shadow, instantly comprehending his captain's intention, hoisted the Moorish colors; then, with his commander, took his station behind the starboard quarter-boat, where the persons of both men were well screened.

A Moor, wearing a turban and pistols, now appeared upon the sloop's quarter-deck and hailed the Leopard.

"What brings thee?" he inquired in his native tongue.

Marston could not answer him; he however raised to his brow—his face alone was visible aboard the sloop—the trumpet he held, as if about to reply; then, pretending to stumble, waited until the craft had shot beyond hearing distance. Before he rose, when, through the trumpet, he shouted words, which, however, were unintelligible to the Moor, at that distance. It was plain that his vessel was not recognized as the same of which the sloop had been in chase the previous day; the reason being that she had only seen him by the bow and stern, and that the Leopard presented an entirely different appearance when seen broadside on. Besides, Marston had taken the precaution to conceal all the white spots dotting the hull by means of a smooth black piece

of bunting, always kept in readiness for such disguise. A part of this cloth he had thrown over the stern, so that the name also might be hidden.

"Steady at the helm, there!" exclaimed the captain.

"Ay, ay, sir!"

Soon the two vessels were hidden from each other by the fog.

"A narrer escape," whispered the Shadow; "but did you see any thing of that black contrivance astern of the sloop, as we passed?"

Marston answered no, when the lieutenant modestly suggested that he believed it was a "drag" purposely left towing astern that the Leopard might gain on her and thus enable her to effect the American's capture. The captain thought likewise, but said he did not see as there was any need of the "drag," as the Leopard could overhaul the vessel quick enough without it.

He had hardly spoken when the noise of creaking blocks and the shouting of officers aboard the other craft proclaimed that the suspicions of her people were excited. The fog suddenly was lighted by a flash, the thunder of a gun followed, and a heavy shot just grazed the Leopard's maintop-gallant halliards.

On boomed the Leopard, merrily tossing her bows, and shaking her tapering masts, as if laughing with Thompson at the trick she had played her enemy.

Marston soon tacked, and running along with the speed of an arrow, thus baffled the other craft, which was now firing her shots wide of the mark.

At daylight next morning the fog clearing, revealed the sloop-of-war, almost hull down to leeward. Ahead a barque ahead of her another sail now rose in sight: an Algerine merchantman, as well as could be made out.

"Up helm!" ordered Marston, exultingly. "I'll cut out that craft under the very teeth of the Algerine sloop-of-war!"

Accordingly he bore down rapidly toward the merchantman at the rate of eight knots. The vessel crowded all sail to escape, while the sloop-of-war, under a perfect cloud of canvas, came bowling along as if to protect her. She soon

was dangerously near to Marston's craft, when, perceiving that it was time to take to his heels, he fired into the fugitive, striking her between wind and water, so that she went down soon after, her crew taking to their boats. Just as they were picked up by the sloop, the latter, now less than a league astern of the Leopard, discharged one of her bow-guns, the shot passing between the brig's fore and main-top-mast.

At this the Shadow, laughing, executed Marston's orders promptly, so that his vessel soon was standing merrily along to leeward, under every thing she could carry.

The captain, now running out one of his quarter-guns, fired a shot which told with good effect, sending the sloop's fore-top-mast crashing by the board.

At this sight his men cheered, waving their caps round their heads. Before night, thanks to the damage done to the sloop, she was hull-down astern.

CHAPTER V.

SURROUNDED.

NEXT morning all hands beheld no less than eight sails in sight. In the first place, hull-down astern, was the sloop-of-war, which Marston believed had by this time rigged a jury-mast in place of the spar which had been lost on the previous day. Off the weather-beam, apparently standing toward him, was another craft, which he doubted not was an enemy; there was another off the lee-bow, too far off to be made out; two more off the lee-quarter; two others far abeam; and ahead, about a league distant, was a vessel about the size of his own, her Moorish colors plainly revealed with the aid of a glass. This vessel's captain, evidently emboldened by the vicinity of his friends, had hauled up into the wind, as if to invite the Leopard to combat.

"Risky bizness!" remarked the Shadow, "with them other chaps creepin' up toward us. If a shadder may ask the question, do you mean to show fight?"

Marston answered by at once ordering the guns double-shotted and the decks cleared for action. He then remarked that he thought he should have time to sink the Algerine ahead if he should not be able to make her his prize.

"Nothing could please me better," he added, his brow darkening, "than to sink the dey's whole navy!"

His little son, coming on deck, soothened the cloud upon his brow. He led the boy below, and shut him up in an obscure place in charge of the steward and several other sailors.

Many of the men had wondered that Marston should have aboard with him, in a vessel subject to the perils of battle, a little one of his son's tender years.

The captain, however, had, besides the boy's health, another object in view: that of inuring to the dangers and vicissitudes of a cruising privateer, this little son, whom he intended for the navy. Constant familiarity, too, with conflict, would, he imagined, harden his spirit, and endow him with that coolness under fire so essential in battle.

Approaching the Algerine rapidly, the captain suddenly hauled up close, to get the weather-gauge of her. She, however, then hauled forward her main-yard, and bracing up sharp with her shoulder-of-mutton mainsail, seemed to shoot right into the wind's eye. In fact, Marston vainly endeavored to weather her, and as she now was running along in a direction toward the other vessels, the captain being in gun-shot distance, at once hauled up and poured a broadside into her. She returned it with some little effect, her shot damaging the American's hull, and one ball passing right through her mainsail. As to the enemy, her foremast tottering a moment, went by the board amid the cheers of the Leopard's crew. Owing to this accident, Marston was enabled to shoot ahead of her and obtain a raking position.

Crack! went his starboard guns, and the yells and screams which followed, as the heathens' deck was swept fire and iron, attested the havoc which was made.

A dasky fellow aboard the Algerine was seen running aft to the signal balliards, to haul down the Moorish colors, but before he could reach them he was shot through the head by his commander.

Marston waited a moment to see if the colors would not

come down, but as the enemy's shot were crashing through his bulwarks, he concluded to keep on firing. The heathen captain, having cleared his foremast, had managed to bring his vessel round, and he now delivered a broadside, which shot away the Leopard's fore yard and killed several of her men.

"Keep off!" howled Marston to the man at the wheel.

The heathen obeyed, when, having hauled upon his weather-boards, the captain stood away from the Algerines. At this the latter, thinking they had driven him, set up a wild yell, and crowding sail, bore after him. They knew well that he had good reason to run, as the sloop-of-war was now coming up a league astern, while the vessel to windward, with her Moorish colors fluttering at the mizzen, bowling along under every thing she could carry, toward the scene of conflict, was not much further off. As she drew nearer, she was discovered to be a frigate—an inspiring circumstance to the Moors aboard the schooner. To capture the "Winged Leopard," which had spread such terror all over the Mediterranean, was indeed something to be proud of, and their wild captain raked his hands as he perceived that he was gaining on the spotted craft.

The reason why he gained was this: that Marston purposely allowed his canvas to shake a little when he had gone a short distance. The Moor came up very fast, and when within a hundred yards of him was about delivering a discharge from his bow-guns, when, suddenly, round came the little Leopard, showing her teeth (guns) and pouring into the Moor a perfect storm of a broadside, which again raked her fore and aft.

Steadily onward, however, came the Moor, now evidently determined to board. Such of his men as had survived the last encounter were seen running out upon the boom, armed to the teeth, their dark faces showing savagely beneath their red Fez caps.

"Look!" said Marston, turning to his gunners, "down with those rats!"

"Ay, ay, sir," was shouted forth in answer, and crack! went another broadside, most of the shot now striking the Moor between wind and water, and grinding through her timbers.

With the noise of thunder, the seas now came pouring into the vessel's hold—down went her stern under water, while her bows were lifted far up. The wild heathens upon the booms drew their cimeters, and cheering, waved them about their heads, not at first perceiving the damage done. When they did perceive it, they endeavored to lay inboard.

Boom! buzz—ker-whash—swash—boom! came the sea, pouring faster, each moment, into the hold, when down went the schooner, submerged to her waist.

Clinging to her booms, the terrified Algerines gave a yell which seemed to pierce the very heavens.

It was their last cry aboard the doomed vessel, which now, rolling half over, suddenly went out of sight like a shot, with her colors still at the gaff.

All this time the windward vessel had been steadily approaching, while the three to leeward, too far off to be as yet readily made out, were creeping up slowly but surely. As to the sloop-of-war, that craft being now not more than half a league astern, Marston wondered why she did not fire into him.

Resolved to take advantage of her singular forbearance, he clipped on every thing in the shape of canvas that he could master, and went booming off with the speed of an arrow, about two points free—a direction which must carry him in dangerous proximity to the vessels to leeward. If the latter were enemies, there was little hope of his escaping.

"We're certainly in a bad fix," said the Shadow, elging up to his captain. "I'm afraid the Leopard has made her last cruise."

"Perhaps so," answered Marston, who, with his glass, was attentively examining the leeward vessels, heedless of the two others thundering after him astern.

Soon, however, the frigate reminded him of her presence by a shot, which went whizzing past his fore-topgallant mast.

"Steady, there, at the wheel!" sang out the captain, as the helmsman, startled by the near vicinity of the frigate, allowed the Leopard to swing about half a point off her course.

Marston then passed the glass to the Shadow, remarking that he was sure one of the leeward vessels was an Algerine.

Although cool and self-possessed, the captain fully realised

the peril of his situation, especially as, owing to the damage his craft had sustained, she was being rapidly overhauled by her two pursuers astern. Now and then a shot from the frigate—the other vessel still forbore firing a single gun—came buzzing around the heads of the Leopard's crew. The captain went to work getting a new fore yard—a spar which would temporarily answer his purpose. Then he rigged a boom foremast, which helped him along a couple of knots.

Meanwhile the foremost of the vessels to leeward was coming up fast, in a direction at right angles with the Leopard's course, evidently intending to intercept the fugitive. She was discovered to be a large gun-brig, with an armament greater than that of the Leopard, whose crew now were somewhat appalled by their perilous situation.

Suddenly Lieutenant Thompson pointed astern to a fog-bank, which was being rapidly driven along toward them.

"The fog served us a good turn once, and it may serve us another," he remarked.

In fact, the mist-cloud approached with such rapidity that the two pursuing vessels soon were hidden by it. Unfortunately for Marston, they were not long screened from sight, the fog soon passing over them to leeward, and leaving them again plainly visible. On went the curtain of mist, sweeping along over the sea to leeward, and finally hiding the three vessels in that direction. Then the fog seemed to remain stationary.

The war-vessels were, meanwhile, fast gaining. The Leopard's crew looked at each other with grave faces; those two heavy ships could sink them in a second. Marston, who had all along seemed perfectly indifferent to his peril, now advanced, and with his own hand pointed one of the quarter-guns. Carefully watching his chance, he at length gave the command to fire. Being promptly obeyed, he was pained to see the frigate's mizzen topmast fall over. This helped him very much; the frigate's speed being slackened, he now was enabled to hold his own. The sloop was by this time within range astern, and the Leopard's crew wondered more and more why she did not fire so as to disable them.

"We certainly have cause to be thankful for that 'ere," exclaimed Thompson.

Half an hour later he pointed about a point off the lee-bow, where, emerging from the fog, was seen the foremost of the other three vessels: the Algerine gun-brig.

At this sight Marston braced his yards and luffed a little, but soon perceiving that this enabled the frigate to gain on him, he made up his mind to run square to leeward, and endeavor to fight his way through such enemies as he might encounter. The gun-brig, perceiving the object he had in view, tacked and came running along fast, off his starboard bow.

The fog at the same moment, partially lifting, now revealed another of the three leeward vessels off his lee-bow, also beating up toward him. Watching her with his glass, he soon discovered that she, too, was a formidable gun-brig, carrying Algerine colors.

Thus the poor Leopard was nearly surrounded; two war-vessels coming up astern, and two more to leeward, and another off his starboard bow.

Marston, compressing his lips, now turned to his lieutenant and ordered him to call all hands aft.

This was done, when, mounting a carronade slide, the captain briefly informed them that it was his intention to either fight his way out of his peril, or sink in the attempt, with his colors flying.

"They shall never be hauled down to a heathen!"

Most of the men cheered, while a few—the Italians—grumbled slightly, saying they thought it was a more useless waste of life, etc., etc.

"Silence!" shouted Marston; then advancing straight in front of the grumblers, he said:

"So you do not want to fight?"

"Not against such odds," was the reply.

"Very well, then; you see that Algerine gun-brig off the starboard bow?"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Well, you who do not want to fight may take the quarter-boat, with a white flag, and surrender yourselves to the heathens!"

The grumblers colored with shame; they glanced around them at the resolute little band, who were willing to stand by

the brig to the last, then took off their hats and simultaneously shouted:

"Marston forever!"

"So you will not desert me? eh, my brave fellows?"

His eyes seemed to shoot magnetism into their frames. They drew their cutlasses, and crossing them, shouted:

"Never, never!"

"God bless you!" cried Marston; "and now every man to his post."

So saying, he motioned to the helmsman to keep off, intending to force his way, if possible, right between the two vessels on each bow.

The guns, meanwhile, were double-shotted, while their workers stripped themselves to the waist, with the air of men determined to do or die.

Still they stood, watching the two Algerine crafts, as the Leopard went booming on with the speed of an arrow.

By the time she was between her two enemies they were within range, and each poured a broadside upon her.

The Leopard returned the fire with good effect, but when the smoke cleared it was seen that she was badly crippled. Her fore-yard was shot away, and her bulwarks were badly torn.

With the sail which remained, Marston kept on, until he perceived that one of the gun-brigs would cross his fore-foot and take him, when he tacked, standing along diagonally between the ship-of-war and the gun-brig, which had been to larboard.

As he tacked along he poured another broadside into the nearest gun-brig, which was, by this fire, made a mere wreck.

At this sight his crew cheered, but the cheer soon was drowned by a shot from the frigate, which killed several of his men.

"Remember, boys, the motto is FIGHT TO THE LAST!" cried Marston, his clarion voice piercing the very souls of his crew.

They answered with a cheer, waving their cutlasses round

their heads; then they beheld a sight which was truly appalling.

Not half a league distant to starboard they beheld the two huge war-vessels—the sloop and the frigate—swooping down toward them with keels booming thunder.

CHAPTER VI.

UNEXPECTED.

A DEAD stillness fell upon every lip—the men looked from one to the other almost holding their breath.

On came the two vessels, their guns frowning darkly from their ports, their huge sails flinging black shadows around them on the sea.

The sloop-of-war was foremost; she came along until within gun-shot distance, when she luffed up, with her broadside toward the Leopard.

Appalled, the crew of the latter stood silently awaiting the doom which seemed in store for them, when, like a thunderbolt, came the voice of Marston thrilling to the hearts of all.

“Now, gunners, stand with your matches!”

“By the eternal! he means to fight that 'ere sloop!” screamed the lieutenant; “and I'll help him as well as any mere *shadder* can!”

The brave gunners stood ready, and Marston was about giving the command to fire, when the word was checked by a movement as singular as it was unexpected on the part of the sloop. His vessel, as stated, had turned her broadside to the Leopard as if about to fire. Instead of doing so, however, she now suddenly braced her head yards, so that her starboard side was turned toward the frigate, which, by this time, was crossing her fore-foot. As the frigate luffed to assist the sloop, her bows pointed abreast the other's main rigging, when the command “FIRE!” was heard ringing through the smaller craft. Then with a deafening crash the whole

broadside of the latter was delivered into the frigate, whose surprised spectators now beheld the Moorish flag suddenly hauled down, while the STARS AND STRIPES SHOT UP TO THE SLOOP'S GAFF!

For a moment astonishment held every spectator dumb; then the cheers of Marston's crew rolled up as if they would split the very heavens in twain!

"Ay, ay, now!" exclaimed Thompson, "who would o' thought that that 'ere craft, which has been in pursuit of us, was our own countryman. Why she wanted to chase us, or why show that Moorish flag puzzles me!"

Now leaning back he broke forth into a merry peal of laughter, which, however, he suddenly checked, laying his hand upon his heart and making up a grim face.

"Not shot I hope?" exclaimed Marston, who had just heard the crack of a musket aboard the Algerine gun-brig.

"Why, no, sir, bless your eyes! I was a-thinking of my poor Poll, so long banished, and wonderin' whether she was not the cause of this 'ere fortunate circumstance, seein' as she used to take an interest in scrimmages and scrimmagin', which was the cause of that 'ere, from an iron pot."

So saying, he took off his hat, showing an ungaily scar on the side of his head.

Just as he spoke, the smoke enveloping the sloop-of-war's stern cleared, revealing her name, CORMORANT, in gilt letters.

As probably has been surmised, her captain, Stockton, had adopted the ruse of hoisting the Moorish flag for the purpose of luring the Leopard close enough to him to effect her capture. He had kept the same colors flying also in order to deceive his enemies, the Algerines. After firing his broadside into the frigate, the captain swung his craft half way round, thus exposing the tremendous fire from the Algerine, which now assailed him. The gun-brig to leeward now was also turned round to assist the larger vessel. So intent was her captain upon this purpose, that he passed almost within gunshot of the Leopard without observing to notice her.

He soon had reason to repent of his indifference; for Marston, now bringing his guns to bear upon the vessel, sent his shot crashing through her bowworks, killing a number of her men and carrying away her foremast.

Although infuriated at this behavior, the captain of the gun-brig, still bent upon helping to destroy the sloop, kept on.

As the vessel dashed on, a cry was heard from the sloop-of-war. That cry came from Mrs. Marston, who, now, for the first time since the conflict commenced—the captain having conducted her with his wife to the safest part of the sloop—saw her husband distinctly, as he stood upon his vessel's quarter-deck.

Almost wild with anxiety, the young wife had quitted her secure retreat, against the advice of Mrs. Stockton, and rushed to the cabin window, to get a view of the Leopard, which she had heard was in sight.

"Husband! dear husband! is our *child* safe?"

Marston's quick eye detected the beloved face, and surprise for a moment held him dumb!

Then he resolved upon a daring feat. The sloop was not distant more than fifty yards; the Algerines evidently intended to board her.

He (Marston) would spare some of the men from his craft, to assist the sloop's captain. He would board her at the head of the brave fellows, and would carry with him his son that his wife might have the satisfaction of seeing her boy. The shots were flying everywhere; the youngster would be in no more peril aboard the sloop than he was at present.

Accordingly, the young captain soon had his cutter down, and his men, with his little Harvey, in it. Away he went, pulling straight for the sloop.

He had nearly reached it, when the gun-brig's captain saw him, and made straight for him, evidently intending to run him down.

At this sight Mrs. Marston could not suppress a cry of mingled terror and anguish.

"Oh, God! save him—save my husband and child!"

As if in mockery of her grief, the fierce crew of the gun-brig, clambering about the bows, waved their cutters aloft above their heads—like demons screaming their exultation. Nearer came the vessel every moment; soon it seemed as if not more than fifty yards intervened between them.

Then Mrs. Marston, unable longer to control herself, rushed on deck, and, making her way among the wounded and dying

--among the flying shot and shell--among officers and men, shouting their orders--gained the side of the captain, and pointed out to him the imperiled boat!

"Go below, my dear madam! Go below!" exclaimed the captain, whose vision was at that moment partially blinded by the powder from a shell, which had exploded near him, "this is no place for you."

"Nay, but the boat! the boat!" screamed the agonized woman. "My husband and child! Great God, they will be--"

She interrupted herself with a piercing scream, for the gun-brig, which had boomed steadily on, now struck the boat amidships, crushing it to fragments, and passing over it!

While Inez, with clasped hands and reeling brain was straining her eyes toward the spot where the vessel had disappeared, a shell exploded near her, the fragments flying round her in all directions.

She looked then not, but suddenly bounding toward the rail, exclaimed:

"They have come up!--they have come up! Thank Heaven!"

She alluded to some of the crew of the boat--among them her husband and child--who had come up astern of the gun-brig, Marston clasping the little boy with one arm, while he struck out with the other.

The next moment down went a boat from the gun-brig, when the swimmers were all picked up and taken prisoners aboard.

"God be praised! they are safe for the present at least!" broke from Inez, as she now obeyed the injunction of one of the officers to go below.

She, however, took her station near the cabin windows which still afforded her a partial view of what was going on.

The gun-brig, after picking up the swimmers, made straight for the ship, and falling up, poured into her a broadside, thus materially assisting the fugitive, whose armament by itself greatly outmatched that of the Cormorant.

Stockton fought and manœvered his best, but being outnumbered in every respect, he had soon suffered severe

damage, having lost his main and fore-topmast, and many of his men.

If it were impossible for him to get away, the captain resolved to fight to the very last. He could not spare a shot for the little gun-brig, which hung upon his quarter like a wasp, doing much damage, while all his fire was absorbed by the larger craft. The din of the conflict now was terrific; the groans and shrieks of wounded and dying mingled with the crashing of shot, and the yells of the Algerines, who exultantly shrieked as they fought.

"We're in a bad fix!" said Stockton's lieutenant, as the Algerine's shot now raked the sloop fore and aft.

"Ay, ay," answered the captain. "It is time we showed our heels!"

Accordingly, having got up a jury-mast at the main, the captain put a good man at the helm, and firing a parting broadside, endeavored to shoot ahead, right between his two enemies.

He had in fact well-nigh done so, when a shot from the frigate, striking his fore-topmast, sent it over by the board!

At the same moment, the frigate came bearing down upon the sloop, her rigging and booms alive with men prepared for boarding!

"Can you do any thing with those fellows on the boom?" inquired the captain of one of his best and oldest gunners.

"Don't know. I will try!" replied the old tar, as he carefully sighted his piece.

An instant later, crash went the gun, and away went the boom, shot away with its living freight, who with gurgling screams, fell headlong into the sea.

"Well done!" exclaimed Stockton.

Meanwhile there was the frigate, still booming along toward him, evidently with the intention of running him down.

"Call the boarders!" cried the captain, when the bugleman at once sounded the order.

At the same moment the captain's lieutenant pointed out to him the gun-brig, which, emboldened by the crippled situation of the Cormorant, now was making straight for the

sloop, evidently intending to pour a broadside between wind and water, and thus sink her enemy !

The situation of the sloop certainly was very perilous, and there seemed to be no escape. The captain briefly addressed his men.

"Those fellows," he cried, "will show us no quarter, my men, if they get us in their clutches. We will therefore fight to the last ! That is all we can do ! What say ?"

Cheers responded : meanwhile the frigate now was close alongside, and her dusky crew were preparing to leap aboard, to cut down the little band opposed to them, when, suddenly, right from the fog astern, a cheer was heard, a huge shot plowed its way through the ranks of the boarding-party, another struck the main-topmast sending it over the side, and then bursting from the mist, her bows roaring thunder, a HUGE UNITED STATES FRIGATE, with the stars and stripes at her mizzen, was seen rolling straight toward the Algerine !

Such a shout as then went up from the imperiled sloop was seldom heard, while the dismayed Algerines aboard the frigate, with a howl of baffled rage, instantly made sail for flight. Away they went as fast as their crippled state would permit, and were soon a full league from the sloop, with the United States vessel closely pursuing and gaining.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WIFE'S ORDEAL.

"An opportune arrival," remarked the lieutenant, addressing his superior.

"Ay, ay," answered Stockton.

As he spoke, an ominous, gurgling sound was heard.

"We are sinking !" said a midshipman, touching his hat to the captain.

"Rig the pumps !" ordered Stockton.

This was done, but it was evident that the water gained
etc.

The carpenter soon came, reporting four feet in the hold.

"We are stove between wind and water, sir!"

"Well, if we must go down, we must!" said Stockton.

"Before we do, however, I intend to pepper that gun-brig!"

The latter vessel now was clapping on every thing she could carry, to get clear of the vicinity of the sloop. Her dusky crew were seen running hither and thither, upon the decks, and aloft, while the harsh shouts of her heathen captain were distinctly audible. Up came Mrs. Marston, pale and excited.

"Captain," she exclaimed, "will you not lower a boat and bring my husband and child to me?"

"No boat could overtake that brig," answered Stockton.

"We must try to get your husband in another way!"

So saying, he turned to his gunners.

"Stand by with your matches at those starboard guns!"

In fact, the gun-brig now was commanded by the starboard broadside of the sloop, which could sink her in a few minutes.

The captain, springing upon the poop, now summoned one of the Moors captured from the merchantman, to act as an interpreter.

"Heave to and surrender," was the order, "or I'll sink you!"

The Algerine captain, however, having now braced forward with a good wind upon his quarter, had no intention of obeying the command.

"Tell the Christian dog of a captain that I defy him!" was his response.

Stockton, turning to his gunners, was about giving the command to fire, when Mrs. Marston, springing forward, caught his arm.

"For the love of heaven!" she cried, "do not! Remember my husband and child are aboard that vessel, and your cruel shot may tear them to pieces!"

The captain seemed to reflect: he glanced from the Algerine to the frigate, to see if that vessel would effect the capture of the craft he was after in time to wear ship and overtake the gun-brig. Convinced, however, that she could not, he was much puzzled as to what he should do.

Meanwhile there were the smoke-begrimed gunners, rolling

their quills and looking impatiently from the brig to their captain, for the Algerine, now fast gathering way upon her course, must, at her present rate of sailing, soon get beyond range.

"Fear not, madam, for your husband and child," Stockton said, after a moment's reflection. "I will fire upon the Algerine—for I must effect her capture—but I will endeavor to point my guns so that they will merely carry away her spars!"

"Be careful! pray be careful!" murmured Inez, her whole frame trembling with anxiety.

The captain ordered his gunners to aim, so as to merely cripple the Algerine's spars. At this some of them slightly grumbled, for the spars might not be hit after all, in which case they would give up the brig as lost to them. She was a swift sailer, moreover, she had suffered little if any damage in her firing, whereas the Cormorant, badly crippled with the loss of her fore and main-topmasts, could by no means go in pursuit of her.

The gunners were all ready, and Stockton was again preparing to give the command to fire, when suddenly a gang of Moors appeared upon the quarter-deck, one of them holding aloft in his arms an object distinctly visible to those aboard the sloop, which as yet was not distant more than a hundred yards from the other craft.

Mrs. Merston's quick eye was the first to detect this object, which was a child—her own little son—she doubted not!

Fastening a rope, rove through a block, under the little one's arms, the Moors hoisted him to the mizzen gaff, where he hung suspended in full view of all aboard the other craft and exactly in range of the sloop's guns. The exultant screams and gestures of the Moors as they pointed to that hanging form, plainly showed that their intention in suspending it there was to prevent the enemy from firing upon them, as the guns, if now discharged, must tear the form of the little one to pieces!

The sight of her boy, hanging thus, aloft, almost drove the mother mad.

"Ah, my child! my darling!" she screamed. "God help him! Surely, captain, you will not think of firing now!"

"I see no help for it!" answered Stockton, gloomily. "If I do not fire, the Algerines will get off with your husband and boy, and when out of our sight I have no doubt the rascals will hang Marston at the yard-arm; whereas, if their vessel is captured, you will get him a free man, if, as you seem to be certain is the case, he is innocent! Consider, madam, I beg of you, remember that your husband will perish if I permit the rascal to escape, although your boy *may* be spared. I will, however, comply with your wishes, whatever they may be. There is unfortunately but one alternative remaining to you, madam, that of **CHOOSING BETWEEN YOUR HUSBAND AND YOUR SON THE ONE WHICH SHALL BE SAVED!**

At this it seemed as if the poor woman would go distracted. She clapped her hands to her burning brow—she gazed wildly toward the swinging form of her little son—several times she seemed on the point of speaking but checked herself with a half-smothered gasp, and one hand pressed tightly to her **throbbing heart!**

"Madam," said Stockton, sadly, as the Algerine rapidly receded, "can you make the choice?"

"No! oh, no!" screamed the agonized woman. "Oh, this is terrible! My *son*—my *son*—my *husband*—my *husband*—my **HUSBAND!**"

Meanwhile there was the Algerine rapidly howling along—she must soon be out of range of the sloop's guns.

With burning glance Mrs. Marston perceived this—her heart seemed to beat thunder in her bosom, her brain swam.

Finally she compressed her lips tightly together: then she sprung to her feet, tossed her long black hair back from her shoulders, and with her fathomless eyes turned heavenward, she pronounced what her writhing soul seemed to shriek out within her was the *doom of her child!*

"**I CHOOSE MY HUSBAND!**"

The words, seeming in their deep earnestness to penetrate every corner of the sloop, were followed by a hoarser shout—the command to **FIRE!**

With a terrific shock, which almost threw the sloop on her beam-ends, the starboard guns thundered—the shot howled—a crash was heard—and down went the Algerine's fore and **mizzen masts** over the side, leaving him a helpless wreck.

"Dead! dead! dead!"—and I spoke his doom! I, his mother! My child! my child!"

Mrs. Stockton, who had now come up, vainly endeavored to soothe poor Inez. There was a hectic flush upon her cheek, while her wild, glaring eyes seemed to prophesy loss of reason. She saw the captain lowering a boat—she saw men, armed to the teeth, leaping into it—she comprehended that they were going to board the brig.

"I must go, too—must go to greet them—a dead son, and a living husband!"

"Nay, Mrs. Marston, compose yourself; there may be fighting; you must stay aboard."

"I will go—I *must* go—stop me not!" exclaimed the half-distracted woman, breaking from the grasp of the other.

So saying, she rushed to the gangway, where the cockswain of the boat interposed. The captain now came up, and endeavored to persuade her to remain aboard. Perceiving that he could not, he ordered his gig lowered, and having seen Mrs. Marston leaped into it, put the vessel in charge of a midshipman, with orders not to board the Algerine until the fighting was over.

Soon after, a couple of boats, loaded with their armed occupants, dashed alongside the gun-brig, when the captain leaped aboard, followed by the lieutenant and the men under his command. The land had scarcely clambered over the rail, when a gun, which had been placed upon the quarter deck so as to command the whole vessel, was discharged killing a number of the boarders.

"Follow me!" was Stockton's command, as he dashed aft, his drawn sword in hand.

His men cheered, and a rush was made toward the Moors, who, before they could reload the gun they had discharged, were compelled to defend themselves against their adversaries, whose numbers somewhat exceeded their own. They were headed by a gigantic fellow, who wielded his cimeter with deadly effect, hewing down an enemy almost at every blow.

The Americans, pressing the Algerines closely, soon compelled the men to surrender. The captain of the dusky band pretended that he was about giving up his sword to Stockton,

but as the latter held out his hand to receive it, the traitor endeavored to plunge it into his body. He must have succeeded, but for his lieutenant, who caught the giant's arm, at the same time drawing a pistol with his other hand. Before he could use it the Moor grappled him, and fell with him into the after hatchway. There, getting uppermost, he pressed both knees on the lieutenant's breast, his voice at the same time ringing through the craft, as he issued some order in his native tongue.

There was a response proceeding from a corner of the hold, where half a dozen Moors, with drawn cutters, stood guard over Marston, who was tied to a post.

One of these fellows now lifted his cutlass, as if to chop the prisoner to pieces, when a musket-ball from a marine, who with a number of the sailors had now leaped into the hold, passed through his heart, and he fell dead.

The other Moors drew back, while the giant himself, springing to his feet with lightning rapidity, darted into the darkness aft, where he was lost to the view of the party who had just entered the hold. At the same moment several of the men severed Marston's bonds.

"My boy?" inquired the anxious father. "My little son? Have any of you seen him?"

There was no response, and Marston sunk upon the deck, burying his face in his hands with a groan.

Meanwhile Stockton had now hoisted the signal for the midshipman in the gig to come aboard with Mrs. Marston. She stood upright in the boat, her face pale as death, her wild eyes searching anxiously round, as the little vessel approached. Soon it was alongside, when the excited woman, not waiting to be helped aboard, ran up the gangway steps like a squirrel.

The decks now were swarming with men bearing off the wounded and dying, and obeying other orders from the officers. The agonized wife looked in vain for the person she most wished to see.

In her bewilderment, searching hither and thither, she soon found herself down in the cabin. Seeing an open hatchway, and a light issuing therefrom, she at once directed her steps thither, hoping to find her husband below. With eager, trembling steps she descended into the hold, when, right ahead of

her, she beheld a gigantic Moor, holding in his hand a lighted torch. This threw over his face a strange, weird glare, showing the ferocity of his aspect, and the expression of a desperate purpose.

At sight of that face Inez drew back, clasping her hands and uttering a low cry. The Moor, startled by the noise, turned, but could not see the speaker, owing to the dark shadow into which she cowered. Muttering something between his teeth, the giant now advanced a step, exclaiming to himself in his native tongue, so familiar to Inez :

"Yes, I will blow up the whole ! My men with the Christian heretics ! Glorious Mahomet ! it is to thee I tender this sacrifice !"

So saying, he was about throwing *the torch into the powder-magazine*, when Inez sprung forward, seizing his arm.

"No, oh no !" she screamed. "Hold ! hold ! for heaven's sake !"

"And who art thou ?" cried the Moor, turning with fierce surprise, and scanning her closely.

"Thy daughter !" she shrieked ; "yes, father, thy own daughter, come to beg thee not to destroy this craft, containing one dearer to her than all else !"

"Ah ! my daughter ! my daughter !" repeated the Moor, in his surprise dropping the torch, "I once had one—and so thou art she ? Yes, it must be so ! I have heard of thee, and of what thou hast done !"

He gazed at her sorrowfully for a few moments, then continued :

"And dost thou suppose that I will spare this vessel for thy pleading ?—for thee, thou wretched, miserable woman, who art the so long ago, to run off with a hound of an Infidel ?"

"Father, my husband is aboard this craft. Ah, have pity upon him—have mercy—"

"Mercy !" interrupted the Moor, with a savage howl, "mercy ! Ho ! ho ! and is it thou who canst speak of that ? No, no, girl, thou shalt die with thy husband and all the rest ; for thou hast deserted the faith of thy fathers—of the great Mahomet—to marry a Christian dog !"

So saying, he lifted the torch to hurl it into the magazine,

when Inez again sprung forward, and with the strength of desperation, endeavored to hold his arms.

Shrieking, she clung to them, while he, with howls of rage, endeavored to dash her from him.

But, Inez now was struggling for her husband, and a power almost superhuman seemed to nerve her frame. Bracing herself against one of the posts in the hold, she still clung to her father, who, in his mad endeavors to free himself, jerked her hither and thither.

Soon the tramp of feet was heard, and the next moment, in rushed a dozen American tars, surrounding the Moor and capturing him.

"Men, have any of you seen my husband and child?" inquired the bereaved woman.

"Your child has just been pulled aboard the sloop," answered a sailor. "He was found almost senseless, lying alongside, by the crew of one of our boats. He is not hurt, at all; luckily, the shot fired from the sloop fell too low to hit him."

"Thank God! And now, where is my husband?"

"A lieutenant from the Leopard came alongside and took him, with the remains of his crew, off to their own craft. Captain Marston did not know you were aboard, ma'am, or I'm certain he wouldn't have gone. However, we'll soon see him again, as Stockton is now about getting ready to board the Leopard."

As the man spoke, the hurried trampling of feet was heard on deck, followed by the order for all below to come up. A couple of armed Algerine schooners, evidently the two which had been seen so far to leeward of the rest, had now come up, and seemed intent on rescuing the gun-brig.

The Leopard's captain stood for them, and poured a broadside into the nearest one. While he was fighting her, Stockton's vessel—the sloop-of-war—went down, her crew, with Mrs. Stockton and little Harry, taking to the boats.

At the same moment the Algerine schooner, engaged by Marston, showed her heels, and pursuers and pursued soon were lost to view in the fog. The other schooner now ran straight for the gun-brig. Her decks swarmed with men armed to the teeth, her crew evidently exceeding those aboard the brig three to one.

The cutters from the sloop, however, were approaching, seeing which the schooner's captain determined to board the brig before they could reach her. She ran up to her, her crew boarded, and pouring down upon the Americans, soon overpowered the little band. Meanwhile the cutters were fast approaching.

The Moorish prisoners were now all recaptured. Captain Costello, glancing at the approaching cutters, then addressed a few words to the schooner's commander, when the latter, having scuttled the brig, left the Americans in possession, taking with him his released countryman and Inez!

This was the best he could do under the circumstances. The cutters' crews would arrive, if he delayed longer, and capture both the schooner and her men. Besides, the latter's captain was frightened on learning of the vicinity of a United States frigate! His best plan, he thought, would be to make an instant retreat.

Left aboard the sinking brig, Stockton and the few survivors of his crew were picked up by the cutters just before the brig sunk.

A few hours after, the same frigate which had been of so much service to them came up and took them aboard.

The vessel had captured the Algerine and manned her with a crew in charge of a midshipman, who was to take her home.

Shortly after the frigate falling in with a homeward bound merchantman, Stockton and wife, with little Harry Marston, were transferred aboard.

As the vessel reached, the commander of the frigate stood on his quarter-deck, waving with his handkerchief a farewell to Stockton.

The latter returned it, lifting his cap and bowing low, with an air of deep respect.

The frigate's commander was Commodore Decatur!

CHAPTER VIII.

ABOARD THE SCHOONER.

WHEN Mrs. Marston found herself aboard the schooner, in the power of that tyrant father from whom she had escaped years before, her feelings were too deep for expression.

The Moor, with arms folded across his breast, stood scowling upon her. He almost hated her for what she had done. She knew that her situation under this man must henceforth be little better than that of a slave.

As the vessel went bowling along upon her course, the agonized wife appealed to her parent:

"Let me go! Set me adrift on a plank—but do not take me with *you*!"

"Ay, you wish to join your dog of a husband! But no! You and he never shall meet again!"

Mrs. Marston said no more; she knew it would be useless. She glanced, however, toward her husband's craft, still dimly visible through the fog, and was resolved to make an effort to reach him.

As this thought came, something dark passed with a bound before her eyes. She looked up, to behold a large, savage-looking bloodhound making for the rail, as if to leap overboard. Then she perceived that the Moorish sailors had set one of the captives adrift on a plank. The dog was eager to get at the man and attack him.

Before it could leap into the sea, the schooner's captain seized it, and ordered some of his men to carry it back into the hold, whence it had escaped, by breaking a rope which had been secured to the leather collar around its neck.

Costello now conducted his daughter into the cabin. As she entered, she noticed a boat through the windows, which had been left towing astern. Her mind was made up in a moment. She would get into this boat, and cut the warp, thus setting herself adrift.

Eagerly she watched for a chance. Her father and the

captain, however, remained conversing until dark. Then both retired to another apartment.

"Now, then, God help me!" muttered Mrs. Marston.

She mounted to the deck and glanced round her. The officer of the watch was forward, issuing some order—the quarter-deck was deserted.

Lightly as a deer, she caught the boat-warp and lowered herself into the little craft. Then, severing the warp with a knife which she had secured, she drifted clear of the vessel.

As the latter vanished in fog and darkness, she heard the shouting of many voices—the trampling of feet—the creaking of blocks and yards, proclaiming that her escape was discovered.

Seizing an oar, she sculled the light craft in a direction which she thought would carry her out of the track of the vessel.

"Ah, husband! dear Harry!" she exclaimed, "if Providence only would direct your vessel this way!"

There was a shout—she had been seen!

Vainly she endeavored to escape. The pursuing boat came on with arrowy speed. The unfortunate woman was overtaken and carried back to the schooner.

"So," quoth the Major, Costello—"you thought you could escape us. Might as well try to escape a thunderbolt from the great Malomet. We will see that you try no such trick again."

He said a few words to the schooner's captain. The latter nodded, when Costello, seizing his daughter's arm, conducted her into the cabin. Here it was dark as pitch; the stench of bilge-water was oppressive.

The Major, laughing derisively, left his daughter there, fastening the hatch above her, and carefully securing it with a crowbar.

Light as a child under love's control, was as determined as a fortress to her oppression.

The noble countenance of her beloved husband, as she had seen it aboard his vessel, haunted her mind—seemed to nerve her heart with encouragement.

"If I must be separated from him, death only shall have power to sever us," she muttered.

Then she sat down and pondered.

How should she get away from the schooner?

She glanced forward, and afar off beheld a dim light. That light came from the forecastle. She would creep forward to the forecastle, would endeavor to get on deck, and if successful, would throw herself overboard with a plank brought from the hold.

Any risk, sooner than to remain in this vessel; any risk to reach her noble husband.

There was every chance that either his vessel or the boats of the sunken sloop-of-war, cruising around the locality, would fall in with her and pick her up.

At any rate, she would make the trial. Forward she crept, gained the forecastle, which, as she had predicted, she found deserted, all hands being on deck.

She crept up the ladder, dragging her plank after her. It was a small plank, but Inez, being an excellent swimmer, had no fear of drowning.

She gained the deck, was creeping toward the rail, when a rough hand was laid on her arm. Looking up, she beheld a Moorish sailor.

"Whereaway, pretty one?" he whispered.

"Hush!" returned Inez, proudly; "dost know who art speaking to? I am Captain Costello's daughter."

"Ay, and I have had orders to look out for you," answered the sailor, "so get you back, madam, into the hold."

Inez ground her white teeth. She must obey.

Back in the hold, she again reflected. Perhaps she could escape through the main-hatch.

She crept beneath it and glanced up, to behold a grinning face.

There, too, was a Moor, keeping guard. Her father knew his daughter's disposition well.

"I will not be baffled!" muttered Inez, clenching her fists and stamping her feet. "No, so God help me."

Again she pondered.

Why could she not crawl into the steerage and squeeze through the port-hole, which was there for the escape of water pumped up from below?

Perhaps, however, there was a guard there, too. She

would soon find out. She crept toward the port-hole, where she heard a deep growl—saw a pair of eyes, flashing like sparks of fire!

The BLOOD-HOUND!

She drew back, shuddering; as she did so, there was another growl—the gnashing of teeth!

Inez kept on. The dog barked. She paused.

Another growl—a spring—the rope holding the dog broke, the savage creature was upon her!

She threw up her arms, when the animal's teeth closed round her bright hair! A moment later the sharp teeth must have crushed her skull, but for a sailor, who, by a rope swinging himself through the steerage hatch with ready promptitude, caught the dog by its collar and ordered it away. The creature, with a fierce, baffled howl, broke from its captor and soon was lost sight of in the darkness.

"Are you hurt, madam?" queried the sailor.

"No; run and catch the dog; it may do more mischief."

Away went the man, plunging into the darkness, when, crawling through the port-hole and drawing her plank after her, Inez, before others of the crew arrived, dropped into the water, and struck out away from the receding vessel.

Her heart beat for joy.

"At last!" she muttered, "free at last!"

Alas! thus upon the wide sea, the heart of many a woman would have failed her. But, Inez was brave, like all Moorish females, and from her childhood had been brought up to diving and swimming off her native coast. Moreover, she was pining herself for a loved husband and child. Minutes elapsed; the schooner's lantern shone dimly far behind the fair swimmer in the fog, when she heard noises aboard proclaiming that her escape from the vessel was again discovered.

Now, however, she had strong hopes of being overlooked. There was a chance of this, as she was low in the water.

Soon she heard a boat lowered—a rocket gleamed!

As the light flashed she dove, thus escaping detection from the keen black eyes which were scanning the water in all directions.

On came the boat! The swimmer saw its dim form, as it

approached, and to avoid it, swam a long ways, her face barely above the water.

The boat came on, passing within a hundred yards of her, the light from its lantern shooting straight into her eyes!

Down she dove; and when she arose, it was to behold the boat ahead of her.

The gleam from the lantern, falling in a broad streak upon the water, revealed something which made even the veins of the swimmer thrill with horror! Cutting the water—approaching her with great velocity—she beheld the fin of a shark!

The creature had scented the blood gushing from a small wound in her arm.

From her girdle Inez drew the small sheath-knife with which she had previously severed the boat-warp, resolved not to die without a struggle.

While swimming away from the shark in zig-zag directions, which for awhile might enable her to avoid it, she heard voices in the boat—that of her father loudest:

“Ay, SET THE BLOOD-HOUND LOOSE! He will track her—we can follow!”

From the stern-sheets of the boat, in which it had been held, the dog was freed.

Into the sea it bounded, remained stationary a moment, snuffing the air; then made straight toward Inez.

She saw the dog as it came—saw that she was menaced with peril from two quarters; from the shark, approaching from one direction, and the dog from the other.

Turning quickly, her knife slipped from her fingers. Thus she was deprived of the means of defense!

On came dog and shark, the former being nearest, promising to reach her first. The boat followed, but it was too far behind to arrive in time to save her if attacked by the hound!

Soon the latter, seeing her, increased its speed, gnashing its teeth and growling as it approached.

Inez, swimming to her plank, held to this as a slight means of defense against the ferocious animal.

He was soon near enough to make a spring for her. He bounded clear of the water, and must have grasped her by the

throat but for the board which she held upward before her.

Angered at being thus baffled, the animal made another dash at her, this time knocking the plank from her grasp!

Then his sharp teeth were open for work, when Inez diving, attacked them, rising behind the dog. The latter, turning, saw her, and now the poor woman uttered a stifled shriek!

SHE WAS BETWEEN THE DOG AND THE SHARK!

The latter was but ten yards from her; already it turned itself over to dive!

"No hope now! Good-by, husband—good-by, child!" murmured the swimmer as she closed her eyes.

Then she heard a great commotion in the water. She opened her eyes, and behold! there was the dog, which had swum within half a foot of her, struggling vainly to keep itself above water. It howled piteously—now and then its tongue protruded—there was terror in its eyes—froth at its mouth.

Soon the darkness of the water round it; an instant later, down it went, dragged under like a shot!

The dog had been the means of saving the life of Inez! The shark, seeing the human's paws before it saw the woman, had grasped them and held the animal a moment, as in a vice, ere dragging it down!

Meanwhile, the boat having steadily approached, Inez now was seen and pulled in.

"A good deed," said her father, "thou hast attempted to leave us! By Mahomet thou shalt not have another chance!"

The loss of his dog seemed to grieve the captain of the schooner.

As Inez was the main cause of it, he offered not the suggested objection to Castello's proposal to confine his daughter, by contract, when they should arrive aboard, to her apartment in the cabin.

The boat was directed in search of the schooner, which now was out of sight in fog and darkness.

Unfortunately the captain had not brought his compass with him.

He pulled hither and thither, his crew shouting in hopes of making themselves heard.

Still there was no response.

"Thou art the cause of this trouble!" Costello savagely cried, frowning on his daughter.

Dark glances were directed toward her. She heeded them not. Seated in the stern-sheets, with head bowed on her hands, her heart lay heavy in her bosom.

The men continued shouting.

All at once, "Boat ahoy!" in a clear, English voice, startled the crew.

"To your oars, away!—pull!" shrieked the boat's captain, as a rushing sound ahead proclaimed the near vicinity of some large craft.

The men laid back to their oars. Inez started to her feet, listening with breathless attention and hoping they would be overtaken.

The rushing sound grew louder; the huge black hull, masts and ponderous sails of a large war-vessel, loomed through the fog.

Costello clasped a hand over his daughter's mouth that she might not speak, while the Moorish captain, at the tiller, directed his vessel to one side, enjoining silence among his crew.

Almost breathless—motionless as statues—the men lay upon their oars.

The vessel drew near; her frowning ports—her lanterns became visible. She was a frigate!

An American frigate! Oh, how the heart of Inez beat in her bosom! How ardently she longed that the boat might be discovered.

Unfortunately the shadow of the ponderous sails threw the little craft into complete obscurity; the light of the lanterns beyond seeming only to increase the gloom.

An instant after the huge frigate faded away in darkness and distance!

An hour later the schooner hove in sight. Soon after the boat's party were taken aboard.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PURSUIT.

THE *Leopard* having lost her fore-yard and fore-top-gallant mast, did not sail with her usual speed, the consequence of which was that the schooner she was after escaped in the fog.

Marston then tacked in order to ascertain what had become of the sloop, aboard which he had already learned from Shadow Jack, his son had been conveyed.

He kept on a long time, when seeing nothing of the sloop his anxiety became almost unbearable.

As the *Leopard* went booming on through the roaring waters the man on the look-out suddenly was seen peering eagerly through the mist.

"What is it?" inquired Marston. "What do you see?"

"I thought I heard a cry of distress," was the answer.

Marston sprang upon the knighthead, and peering ahead, saw a faint object upon the water.

It proved to be a man clinging to a plank.

Being seen aboard, he stated that he was one of the sloop's crew, who had boarded the gun-brig. He explained to Marston about the subsequent recapture of the Moorish prisoners, and stated that he was one of the few Americans who had been carried away from the brig.

Afterward the Moorish captain concluding not to be troubled with this man, had thrown him overboard with a plank.

"I'm sorry for other prisoners," said the sailor, "especially for that poor, sweet creature, Mrs. Marston, who came all the way from home."

"What? Mrs. Marston? my wife?" exclaimed Harry, "a prisoner among the Algerines?"

The unexpected news for a moment staggered him, but he soon recovered his self-possession and plied the man with questions.

Having ascertained the direction taken by the Algerine

Marston, while making repairs, clapped on all sail in pursuit. The enemy he knew was of larger caliber than his own craft and carried a greater armament; still he was determined to risk every thing for his beautiful wife.

"God pity her!" exclaimed the Shadow, "if she falls in the power of them Moorish heathens. If it was my Polly, I think I'd feel the greatest concern, but, thank fortune, she's past gettin' into any such scrape seein' as she's under ground."

It was not until three days later that Marston came in sight of the vessel he was in pursuit of, far ahead, almost hidden by the shadows of twilight.

Next morning she was nowhere to be seen; but the port of Algiers being in sight far ahead, the captain at once concluded that the craft had anchored there.

"Dang'rous bizness," said Thompson, as the vessel bowled along toward the port, her spotted sides concealed by the tarpaulin, and the Algerine flag fluttering at her gaff; "still, I ain't the man to back out, although it's true I'm nothing but a mere shadder!"

As the breeze was straight from land, Marston had an excuse for backing and filling until night, when, having run along the coast until he found himself opposite a lofty headland, about fifty miles above the town, he dropped anchor in a little bay sheltered by the elevation, the shadow of which would conceal his craft, whose spars were of a dark color, from the vision of any Algerine vessel out at sea.

Then he informed his lieutenant of his intention, which was to go ashore disguised as a Moor, and, if possible, spy out the whereabouts of his wife.

"Beg pardon, sir, but you ain't going alone? You're to take me along with you! Being a mere shadder nobody will mind me, and I'm sure I may help you!"

"No; I feel confident that I can accomplish matters better alone. At any rate the first thing to do is to discover the whereabouts of Inez. Afterward, if I find I shall need assistance, I shall come for it!"

"I don't know," said Jack, mournfully, "but this 'ere is risky. I'm afraid I'd never clap eyes on you again, captain. I feel somehow, just as I felt before that 'ere Poll of mine died."

"Cheer up, my friend. Take good care of the brig while I am gone, and don't feel anxious if I am long absent."

"God bless ye!" exclaimed Thompson.

"Good-by!"

The two shook hands, after which Marston sprung into his gig, already alongside, and was pulled ashore.

He had adopted the dress of a Moor, and having also stained his face, there was little danger of his disguise being penetrated by those who were not acquainted with him.

Bidding his crew a hasty adieu, he hurried along the coast, walking several miles before he thought of taking rest. Then rolling himself in his cloak, he threw himself down and slept until daylight. Partaking of some food, which he had brought in a haversack, he rose and continued his way, reaching the town of Algiers before noon.

Gazing toward the harbor, he soon discovered the Algerine gun-boat among the vessels at anchor. While watching her he saw putting off from her a boat containing a female.

At this his heart gave a great bound; the female he suspected to be his wife, his own beloved Inez!

As the boat drew nearer all doubts upon the subject were removed: the unmistakable form of the fair prisoner was fully revealed.

"It is she!" gasped the young man, mechanically fumbling a pistol beneath his cloak.

The boat struck the quay—out sprung a tall Moor in whom Marston recognized the father of his wife.

This man, taking the arm of his daughter, led her rapidly up the street.

Marston followed at a distance. Soon he quickened his steps—he saw the two enter a building which was familiar to him—the one from which he had escaped, years before, while a slave.

He now stalked off, resolving to wait until night before attempting the rescue. The Moor would perhaps return to his vessel before dark, thus rendering the young captain's task more easy to accomplish.

As night approached the streets became nearly deserted, at dark, Marston hurrying along toward the Moor's residence, encountered but one or two pedestrians, moving toward the

landing. One of these he recognized as the father of Inez. He soon reached the house. As mentioned it was familiar to him. He entered, mounted a flight of stairs, and knocked at the door behind which he hoped to find his wife.

The door was opened by a dwarfish little Jew, a slave, hideous and deformed.

Marston at once caught him by the throat and threw him down.

"No noise, or I'll kill you! Where is your master's daughter?"

The slave gasped out, "In the next room!"

"Lead me to her!"

The dwarf limped forward, trembling all over, for the muzzle of the captain's pistol was pressed against his head.

Taking a key from his pocket, the slave unlocked a door.

All was darkness in the room, but the young captain heard the sobs of Inez, in one corner of the apartment. He pulled a strong piece of ratline stuff from his pocket, and dexterously secured the slave to a huge bedstead, which he saw looming up through the darkness.

"No noise now, for your life!"

"Who is there?" inquired a sweet voice.

"Not so loud," whispered Marston. "I, your husband come to save you!"

"Ah! what! my own Harry?"

Having ascertained from the dwarf that there was a lamp on the mantel, Marston lighted it, thus revealing the beautiful face of his wife, who was actually tied by a rope to a ring near the hearth.

Quickly severing the rope with his sheath-knife, the captain received Inez in his arms.

There was no time for explanations.

"Quick!" she exclaimed; "my father has only gone for a short time, to see a merchant near the wharf!"

The captain, seizing a piece of wood, gagged the dwarf. Then he quitted the house, his left arm clasping that of Inez firmly, his right upon the stock of his pistol.

CHAPTER X

THE ENCOUNTER.

THE two hurried along the street, but had not proceeded far when a man, turning a corner, suddenly confronted them.

The moon now was up, and Inez turned aside, but not in time to escape recognition.

The man was her father!

Forward he sprung, seizing her arm, when, with one blow of his pistol upon the fellow's head, Marston knocked him senseless.

Senseless but for a few seconds! Then he sprung up, and catching a glimpse of the fugitives, uttered a sharp, prolonged cry.

That cry drew several pedestrians to his side—among them a couple of Arabs who had been passing.

Marston, who was not yet more than a hundred yards from his enemies, threw an arm around his wife's waist, and sped on with her swift as the wind.

Bang! went a pistol, and a bullet whizzed over the heads of the runaways!

The Arab runs almost as swift as the death-dealing assassin!

Fast the pursuers gained on the fugitives. Soon they were close upon them, their feet pattering the earth like drops of rain.

Inez, breathless with fatigue, could go no farther. She sank back, when supporting her with one arm, Marston drew his sword.

The Arabs, flourishing their cimeters, rushed upon him. He fought desperately until behind him came the father of Inez, knocking him down with a blow from his pistol!

Inez screamed with anguish; the Moor caught her by the arm.

"Who is this?" he fiercely inquired, gazing down upon the prostrate captain.

"A friend!" she faltered. "Ah, do not hurt him!"—throwing herself before her father, who had raised his cimeter above the head of the senseless man.

"His garb is rich," said one of the Arabs to the Moor. "We must have plunder!"

"Welcome," answered the pirate. "Strip him!"

Like wolves the Arabs pounced upon the prostrate man, and tore off his cloak and trowsers, thus disclosing the American uniform worn beneath.

"A dog of a Christian," exclaimed the Moor, who, however, as the moon was at that moment hidden by a cloud, did not recognize the blood-stained face.

"Kill?" inquired the Arabs.

"No; take him for your slave! Beat him; away with him to your native desert; I give him to you! Inez shall not even have the satisfaction of *seeing* him *my* slave!"

"Father, Oh, father!" pleaded Inez.

She pleaded in vain. The Arabs, when the captain recovered, seized him, and having received money from the Moor, for the services rendered him, carried off their prisoner.

Costello then dragged his weeping daughter home with him.

"The merchant, Marco, will be here to-morrow. You must receive him well. I intend that you shall *marry* him!"

"I am already married."

"No. The marriage-laws of Christian dogs signify nothing. You are free!"

The merchant came on the morrow, to be coldly—scornfully received by Inez.

Her father was furious.

"I will force you to marry him!"

"I will sooner die!" answered Inez.

"We shall see!"

Away toward the mountains Marston was dragged by the Arabs. They had robbed him of his weapons and tied his hands behind his back. Still he watched them keenly, hoping that chance might afford him an opportunity to escape.

The country swarmed with robbers.

The Arabs, with their prisoner, were passing a dell

shadowed with thick clumps of shrubbery, when four armed men sprung out and attacked them. Perceiving that he was unnoticed for the time, Marston dropped, and rolled into the thick shrubbery near at hand. Jerking vigorously at his cords, he soon severed them; then, crawling rapidly through the brushwood, he sped along as fast as he could go, in a direction leading him toward the town.

When within a mile of the city, he crawled into an old deserted hut to rest and reflect.

He concluded that he would make, on the morrow, another attempt to rescue Inez.

The long hours wore away. He waited until about twelve o'clock on the following night, when he entered the town, keeping in the shadow of the houses; and finally succeeded, unobserved, in reaching the building containing his beloved Inez. There was a light in the window of the room she had occupied on the previous night. Soon he saw *her* face at the window.

"Inez," he called softly.

She raised the sash and looked down.

"Who is there?"

"Marston—your husband!"

The sash was closed; a moment later the wife was by his side.

"My father has gone aboard his vessel; he will not be back before one o'clock. Oh, Harry, how did you escape?"

He briefly explained.

The two sped swiftly through the town. They had not gone far, however, before they beheld, by the light of the moon, which now was up, a party of Moorish sailors approaching.

"What shall we do?" gasped Inez. "Perhaps those are my father's men."

The men saw them and approached, until they caught sight of Marston's uniform, when they set up a wild shout and rushed toward him, their suspicions excited.

Marston quickly decided what to do.

He hurried his wife to the wharf, not more than fifty yards distant. There were a number of boats belonging to the different vessels in the harbor, lying alongside the landing. Into

one of these he sprung with Inez, and seizing a couple of oars, pulled off.

The Moorish sailors remained a few minutes holding a consultation, then four of them sprung into a boat and started in pursuit.

Their shouts roused the crews of the vessels in the harbor. The father of Inez, springing upon the quarter-deck of the *Malo*—a new craft now under his command—saw what was taking place. Although having no suspicion that the man and woman in the fugitive boat was *Lis* daughter and her husband, yet he resolved to lower and intercept them, so as to discover the meaning of their flight.

His boat, manned by half a dozen good oarsmen, soon was in the water.

It was pulled ahead of the runaways, and then directed so as to intercept them.

The maneuver was accomplished, and great was the rage of the Moor when he recognized the captured ones.

Inez, sobbing with mingled anguish and terror, begged her father not to injure her companion.

The latter's submersion in the water, as he was being dragged into *Lis* captor's boat, had partially removed the stain from his face.

One of the Moorish sailors, on seeing that face, uttered a wild cry.

"The captain of the *Winged Leopard*!" he screamed.

He had once been Marston's prisoner, captured from a Moorish schooner.

Instantly half a dozen cimeters were raised.

"Hold!" exclaimed the Moorish commander; "is it possible?"

A close scrutiny of the captain's face convinced him of the truth of the statement.

"Death—death to the captain of the *Leopard*!" screamed the Moors, flourishing their weapons.

"Down, all of you!" howled the captain; "this is a valuable prisoner. The dey must be seen before we execute him!"

Marston was conveyed aboard the *Malo*, and, loaded with chains was thrust into a corner of the hold.

"So!" exclaimed the Moorish captain, fiercely, to his daughter; "this husband of yours is the captain who has done so much damage to our vessels."

"Mercy, mercy upon him, father!"

"No; the dog shall die a horrible death, if I have any influence!" was the reply.

Then turning quickly to the agonized wife:

"Where is his vessel? The Leopard must be somewhere in this neighborhood."

"I do not know."

"You lie, daughter!"

Her manner soon convinced him that she did not.

"We have the captain; we must get the craft!" cried the Moor, sternly.

Next morning he informed the dey of his capture. That official was delighted, and gave orders for the prisoner's execution in any manner which should best suit the captain.

He also ordered several of his vessels to cruise in search of the Leopard, which must be somewhere along the coast.

The Moorish commander determined that Marston should suffer severely for the many injuries he had inflicted on the Algerine navy. He resolved to almost starve him to death—then give him food an hour before hanging him up at the yard-arm!

Inez knew her father's purpose; she heard him explain it to his first lieutenant, and she resolved to thwart him if possible.

She prayed God to give her strength; then her eyes flashed, and her whole countenance was lighted with a beauty which seemed almost supernatural.

Her father did not guess that she knew his intention. He resolved, however, to keep her under his eye aboard the *Malo*. She should not escape him again.

Meanwhile, he sent word to the merchant where she was, informing him that he was welcome to come aboard and endeavor to soften her heart toward him.

Feeling now quite sure of Inez, who must soon become a widow, the merchant began paying his addresses in good earnest.

A sudden change seemed to have come over the young wife

She did not frown upon her suitor, and, though she did not permit him to come very near her—to even touch her hand—she smiled upon him.

Two days after Marston's capture she overheard a fisherman state to her father that he had seen a vessel, lying off shore about fifty miles below the town, which he suspected was the *Leopard* disguised.

Hitherto the dey's vessels had been cruising along the coast in a direction leading past an Algerine fort, and opposite to the shore bend, which would have led them to the anchored craft; now, however, the fisherman's words must set them on the right track.

Inez had resolved to convey word to her husband's vessel of the situation of affairs. She hoped that the craft might not only escape the cruisers, but might also effect the rescue of her husband.

Marco she would use as a means of enabling her to carry out her intention.

"It is a fine day," she said at length; "I would much like to take a sail in a small-boat."

"Why not?" inquired Marco; "my boat is alongside."

"And will you row me?"

"Certainly; but hold! I believe your father never allows you to leave the vessel."

"True; but he is now ashore. We can get back before he returns, which will not be until to-morrow."

"I do not like to run the risk."

"Oh, so you will not even do this for me?" exclaimed Inez, pouting.

The merchant was undecided; the end of it was that he consented.

There was, however, a difficulty still to encounter—the first lieutenant, who had received orders relative to Inez.

Soon, the young wife, hearing him talking in an adjoining room with the second officer, said:

"Now is our time!"

And they mounted on deck, descending into Marco's boat.

The merchant got up his sail.

"Which way?"

"Shoreward," she answered.

Marco trimmed sail, and away went the boat, speeding shoreward.

Soon it struck the beach.

"What now?" queried Marco.

Inez gave him a bewitching smile.

"Will you get me some of those red flowers?" pointing far up the summit of the cliff which bound the beach.

"Certainly," answered gallant Marco; and away he went.

The moment he was lost to view in the shrubbery containing the flowers, Inez shifted the sail, and having secured the sheet, went shooting along the coast with great speed, the wind being in her favor.

"Go, gallant boat!" she exclaimed; "life or death may depend upon thy speed!"

Lightly as a bird the boat skimmed along over the waters.

"Halloa! halloa! Where are you?" came the voice of Marco.

Inez, keeping well in the shadow of the crooked coast, soon was completely screened by the twilight gloom, now fast gathering.

The breeze freshened—on sped the boat.

There was a good hand at the tiller; the course of the little vessel was steady enough to have done honor to a veteran sailor.

Soon up came the silvery moon, lighting the watery path of the daring adventurer. She glanced behind her and saw, far away, the lights of the town and the vessels in the harbor. She had already made several good leagues.

"Now heaven help me, as it has thus far!" she exclaimed, pressing her hand to her burning brow.

The wind continued freshening; soon it blew a roaring gale. The little boat, pitching violently, buried bows and rail—seemed in fact every moment as if it must be swamped.

Still unharmed—beholders of the drenching seas, Inez continued on, looking keenly along the coast as she proceeded.

It was almost ten o'clock, when from the shadow of a headland she was passing came a hoarse hail:

"Boat ahoy!"

She uttered a joyful cry. It was an American who spoke—she had reached her destination!

A minute later she saw a vessel's masts looming up in a small bay, sheltered from the gale.

She ran alongside, a rope was thrown out, and a minute later she was on deck!

"I'm nothin' but a shadder, ma'am, which I s'pose is the reason you can't see me. Who be ye?"

Breathless with fatigue, Inez could not at first answer.

"Hope it isn't the ghost of that 'ere Poll of mine!"

"This is Jack Thompson, my husband's friend, I believe?"

"Why, bless your eyes! I oughter know that voice! Come into the cabin, ma'am."

When in the cabin the Shadow, eying the young wife, exclaimed:

"Mrs. Marston! Ay, ay, as true as I live and my Polly doesn't! But where's Harry?"

In a few words Inez explained all.

"I knowed the lad would get into trouble," almost sobbed the Shadow. "Ay, ay, but I'll be *shadderer* even than I am now, if I don't try to help him out of this 'ere scrape. Beggin' your pardon, ma'am," he added, bowing, "but you're a noble wife—jist sich another in tryin' sarcumstances as that 'ere poor Poll of mine was afore she went under."

So saying, he resorted to the whisky-flask.

Mrs. Marston could not be persuaded to take either refreshment or sleep; her mind was so bent upon her husband's rescue that she could think of nothing else.

The Shadow went on deck and eagerly watched for a change of wind.

While doing so, he called his crew aft and stated to them his intention of endeavoring to effect the release of their gallant captain.

The men cheered and entered heart and soul into his purpose.

At about one o'clock the wind veered round, blowing almost south and west, when Jack got up his anchors, and crowding sail, went bowling along straight for Algiers!

He trusted to the darkness to enable him to accomplish the

daring plan Le Lal formed, which was to run the *Malo* aboard and take her by surprise!

Booming along, with every thing humming, with all her lights out, and the tarpaulin still over her spotted sides, the *Leopard* was close upon the harbor at about two o'clock.

"Can you tell your father's craft, ma'am?" inquired the Shadow, as he scrutinized the lanterns ahead.

"Yes; the one with the red light."

"Now mind yourself at that wheel!" ordered Thompson.

"Ay, ay, sir!"

The men were all ready, armed with swords, pistols and boarding-pikes.

In breathless silence they awaited the decisive moment.

Away went the *Leopard*, stretching on straight for the *Malo*.

"Stand by, lads!" came the Shadow's shrill whisper, "and may my departed Polly watch over the success of this 'ere plan!"

The *Leopard* now was within speaking distance of the *Malo*. A rough hail came from the latter vessel.

"Ship ahoy!" interpreted Inez, as she stood trembling near the companion.

"I'll obey ye, ye infernal blackskins!" growled the Shadow.

He ordered his men out upon the booms, on the yard-arms, everywhere which would afford them the best opportunity for boarding.

Another hail from the Moorish vessel!

It was the last!

With terrific crash the cruiser came grinding alongside the *Malo*; down went her yards (the *Leopard's*) by the gun. Active fellows made her fast to the Moor; the next moment, with a hoarse-pressed cheer, the *Leopard's* crew, headed by the Shadow, sprung aboard.

Completely taken by surprise, the Moors made but slight resistance. Those who attempted to make a stand were hurled down like grain.

Sticks, grunts and curses followed. In their own harbor with the dey's navy right in their vicinity, the pirates found themselves in the power of the Americans!

The noise of the brief conflict, however, had been heard. Shouts were heard all over the harbor; lights flashed hither and thither, throwing a lurid glare over the waters.

In that glare the white spots of the Leopard, now denuded of the tarpaulin covering, showed distinctly.

"Quick!" exclaimed the Shadow, as he plunged into the hold. "Quick, my lads, jump aboard and stand by!"

He soon found Marston: with two strokes of his knife he freed his cords.

"All right, captain; your wife is safe aboard the Leopard!"

"A thousand thanks, my brave friend!" exclaimed the young captain, as he hurried with his rescuer aboard his own craft.

The next moment his wife was in his arms. The present, however, was no time for words. Blocks were creaking, yards moving, sails flapping all over the harbor.

"Hands by the halliards! hoist away! sheet home!" were the orders, and away went the little Leopard, stretching off close hauled, with the water thundering round her bows.

"With your permission, captain, I'll jist give them heathens a parting salute!" quoth the Shadow.

"All right, Jack!" and bang went one of the Leopard's guns, sending a shot right into the midst of the harbor fleet.

"Hooray! hooray!" screamed the Shadow, and "Hooray!" repeated his men.

The jubilee was of short duration. Half a dozen guns thundered from the fleet in the harbor, and from the fort; away went the Leopard's foremast by the board.

"My own husband! we will be captured again!" exclaimed the young wife.

"Cheer up!" answered Marston. "We may contrive to edge away from them in the dark!"

Having cleared the wreck, he now tacked, standing along the coast. The Leopard, owing to the loss of her foremast, was difficult to manage, and made but slow headway. Still, Marston's maneuver was a good one. The Algerines, thinking he was running straight out to sea—for there being no lights aboard his craft, and the night being very dark, they could not see him—were all standing off in that direction, their lanterns growing fainter every moment.

The speed of the Leopard was not greater than four knots ; her captain trusted, however, to getting out of sight of his enemies, even at this rate, before daylight.

At dawn all hands were on the alert. They were by this time many miles above the town, and their enemies were not in sight from the deck. Still creeping along, as much in the shadow of the coast as possible, Marston sprang aloft, glass in hand.

Far, far away on the dim seaboard he beheld sail after sail dotting the ocean.

Of course as he could see *them*, their occupants must see *him*, unless the shadows of the headlands he was passing rendered him invisible.

Suddenly he came down to the deck like lightning.

"We are seen!"

"It's all up with us, then!" exclaimed Shadow Jack, "and there's a chance of my j'ining that 'ere Poll of mine, before night!"

Marston ordered his men to get up a spar, which answering for a foremast, might help the craft along.

It helped her a few knots ; still the other vessels rapidly gained.

Bang ! came a shot, at this moment, from some invisible quarter.

"Good heavens ! the fort ! the fort !" screamed Mrs. Marston.

She pointed toward the summit of a lofty elevation, partially screened by trees.

"I had forgotten !" she said. "A fort has lately been erected there!"

The Shadow came aft, laughing.

"This is no time for mirth, sir !" exclaimed the captain, sternly.

Thompson instantly grew solemn.

"My poor Polly ! Years ago she went under ground from overeating herself !"

More whisky.

"Be careful, sir ; don't get drunk !" said Marston, taking the flask away from Thompson.

The Shadow sprung up into the air, and came down, **slapping his thin flanks.**

"An idea—an 'inspiration' has just come to me!"

Bang! from the fort again, and the jury-mast of the vessel flew to splinters!

"The 'inspiration' alluded to, sir," continued Thompson, not heeding the interruption, "is the taking of that fort, afore them other heathens come up!"

Marston liked the idea; his nostrils dilated, his eyes flashed.

"What say, lads?" turning to his men. "Will you help me to take that fort?"

"Hooray! hooray!" was the answer.

Another shot came, knocking away the brig's mainmast. Down it went, crashing alongside, and the wreck drifted shoreward!

"Quick, men! jump!" thundered Marston. "Stand by the cable!"

"Anchorin' won't save us!" said the Shadow; "it's too late!"

In fact the vessel had been running along so near the coast that the rapid currents there, drawing her shoreward, now sent her grinding upon a sunken reef about fifty yards from the beach!

Over she went, then back again, and became stationary, her keel firmly wedged in a rift between the rocks.

Meanwhile the fort kept banging away, but the vessel now was too close in shore for the shot to reach her.

Marston took a boat and went ashore to reconnoiter. He found the elevation upon which the fort was erected both steep and rugged. The Algerines, not having attached much importance to this position, had neglected to hew away the rocks, which would afford an ascending enemy excellent shelter from the shot fired from above. It was evident that the main intention of this work was to annoy hostile vessels approaching the harbor.

Marston returning to the beach, made a signal, agreed upon, for his lieutenant to come ashore with fifty of the crew, well armed with muskets, sabers, boarding-pikes and pistols.

The Shadow's accouterments were certainly formidable for one on his slender proportions. Slung across his back was a huge musket, in his belt a ponderous old broadsword, a couple of pistols and a long dagger.

"With these," he remarked, bowing to Marston, "I'll make sure of doin' somethin', although I'm nothing but a mere shadder. Once I was stout, but the death of that 'ere—meanin' Poll—has reduced me mightily!"

"Come, we must be quick," said Marston, sternly, "in what we have to do!"

The men, formed in single file, soon were speeding up the steep ascent, mounting from rock to rock, swinging from spur to spur, with the agility of true seamen.

Half-way up the ascent they beheld a Moorish sentinel, who quickly gave the alarm.

"Now, men, forward!" shouted Marston. "Now is the time!"

The brave fellows followed their leader with the speed of deer. But two guns were fired upon them before they were at the foot of the earthy parapet uninjured. Up the steep earthwork they rushed in line, just as sixty or seventy Algerines sprung, muskets in hand, upon the parapet to oppose them.

With a cheer, the little band of Americans dashed upon the party before they could point their muskets, and beat them down into the inside of the fort.

Now a desperate hand-to-hand combat ensued.

Marston, encouraging his men, fought with lion-like bravery, nor was the Shadow backward in distinguishing himself.

First he knocked down a huge fellow with his clubbed musket, then commenced discharging his pistols right and left. Having thus disposed of several Moors, he began wielding his ponderous broadsword with a strength and dexterity which certainly was remarkable for a "mere Shadow."

The combat lasted half an hour. The Moors were beaten back again and again, but as often they rallied.

As their numbers exceeded those of the Americans, it seemed doubtful which side would prove the victors, until Shadow Jack, with the assistance of several of his men, succeeded in wheeling round one of the fort guns, so as to bring it to bear upon the enemy.

Marston perceiving his intention, quickly drew his men aside, and crash! went the heavy piece of artillery.

The effect was terrible!

Down went a dozen Moors, bleeding and dying.

"Now, lads!" came Marston's clarion voice, and dashing upon the remnant of the enemy, the little band soon compelled the followers of Mahomet to surrender.

The Shadow sprung to haul down the Moorish flag, but the captain stopped him.

"Let it wave! It will deceive our enemies approaching from sea!"

"Well, now!" quoth Thompson, "it's an actual fact that I forgot all about them 'ere!"

CHAPTER XI.

STRATEGY.

HAVING detailed a portion of his men to take care of the wounded and dying, Marston sent word to his wife, acquainting her with his success.

Meanwhile, he could now plainly see the approaching Algerine vessels, less than two leagues distant. On they came, their crews having no suspicion that the fort was taken.

The captain now held a consultation with his first lieutenant, when they decided upon the following plan:

The wreck of the Leopard, perfectly useless, should be set on fire! The Algerine sailors would conclude that the catastrophe had been caused by a shot fired from the fort.

They would probably send some officer to the commander of the position, which, with the Moorish flag still flying, of course would give no sign of having been captured. The emissary would be taken prisoner; others would be sent who would be served in the same manner. Thus Marston would be enabled for hours, perhaps for several days, to prevent the enemy's discovering the capture of the fort. This delay might prove of the greatest advantage to him.

The Shadow had informed him of what Mrs. Marston had told the lieutenant on the previous night: that a fleet, under

Commodore Decatur, was already well on its way toward Algiers.

This fleet might come in sight during the delay caused by Marston's stratagem, in which case the safety of the Leopard's crew would be insured.

The captain set his crew to work at once. The Leopard, still being hidden by the lofty headland, behind which she had anchored, his movements were concealed from the approaching enemy.

Mrs. Marston was conducted to her husband. Then all the valuables which could be brought away from the wreck in time, were conveyed to the fort, after which the vessel was fired.

The flames spread rapidly; wreathing, twining, roaring, crackling, they rolled upward in huge sheeted volumes, which threw a red glare far along the sky.

The Algerines saw the fire; their vessels came within about a league of the burning vessel, where they lay to, as if their commanders were in doubt. Soon, however, they braced forward, and hailing close to the wind, stood along the coast, evidently believing that the Leopard's crew had taken to their boats.

From one of the vessels a boat now approached. As it drew near the coast, the last of the Leopard vanished from sight in smoke and flame!

The boat kept on; its crew landed, and an officer, followed by a couple of men, was seen making his way up the rocky elevation, evidently bound for the fort.

The shadow, disguised as a Moor, opened the gate for him. The officer started back on seeing him, for Thompson's face was any thing but Moorish.

Jack gave a loud whoop, and laid his hand on the officer's shoulder.

"You are my prisoner—prisoner to a mere shadow!"

The man drew his sword; before he could use it, he and his party were surrounded, captured, and led into the fort.

The boat was hauled up and concealed in shrubbery. It might come of use at some future time.

The vessel from which the officer had departed now lay

with her main-yard aback, evidently awaiting his return. She waited several hours, when she showed a signal at her main.

Marston hoisted a blue flag, which he meant to be translated, "Wait a while longer."

The Algerine evidently took the signal as intended. She waited until near dusk, when another boat came ashore.

The party in this boat were captured as the others had been.

"Here's half-a-day gained," said Marston. "Do you see any thing yet, Jack?"

"Nothing!"

Next morning the Algerine vessel was seen lying off and on, evidently waiting for the return of her officers. She had sent away all her boats.

The other vessels not having, of course, discovered the Leopard's crew, now were seen drawing toward their companion.

An hour later, the latter fired a gun, when, as before, Marston hoisted the blue signal.

The wind came on to blow a gale toward the land; the Algerine vessels were compelled to give the coast a wide berth to save themselves.

"Good!" exclaimed the Shadow, laughing heartily, "hope it'll keep on blowing until them 'pealers' of Decatur come in sight!"

He laughed heartily—then checked himself.

"Not a laugh," he muttered, "since it's for that 'ere I'm a-thinkin'."

Meanwhile the wind freshened to a gale, and soon roared thunder. The Algerines were obliged to make for the harbor.

Next morning there was a change, when the vessel which had lost her officers was seen approaching.

Up went the blue signal again, when she lay with her main-yard aback.

Before night it was evident that her crew were much puzzled, if not suspicious, regarding the prolonged absence of the officers.

Day passed—night shadowed land and sea.

At about nine o'clock one of the sailor-sentries thought he could see a dim form stealing off away from the fort.

"Who goes there?"

No answer.

Crack! went the sailor's musket, when the man disappeared behind a rock.

The report roused all hands.

Learning what had taken place, Marston sought the tent in which his prisoners were confined, and counting them, perceived that one had escaped.

He questioned the men, who guarded the tent, but they stated that they had seen no person leave the place.

The captain soon perceived that one of them was intoxicated. This accounted for the prisoner's escape.

"Go to your quarters, sir!" cried the captain, sternly.

"Who gave you whisky?"

"The first lieutenant."

Marston called the Shadow, and reprimanded him sharply.

"Ay, ay," answered Thompson, "it was all my fault; but I didn't think that an amount of whisky which wouldn't affect a mere shadder like me, would hurt a stout fellow like that 'ere!"

He seemed much troubled, and pulling the whisky-bottle from his pocket, eyed it sternly.

"Blast your eyes," he said; "oh, you infarnal rascal, to play me such a trick as that!"

He put the bottle in his pocket and half sobbed:

"I'm afraid the fort is lost through me—through a miserable shadder like me!"

"Perhaps not so bad as that; but be careful in future. Meanwhile take a party of men, and run, as if there were wings to your heels, after that escaped prisoner."

The Shadow obeyed. Away he went at the head of half a dozen fleet-footed sailors.

They had not proceeded far when they beheld a shadow ahead, moving cautiously along.

"That's him!" yelled Thompson, "if it isn't *my* shadder."

He gave three bounds forward, and grasped the object, falling upon its back.

It uttered a loud, peculiar whine and sent him flying into the air!

It was a mule!

Thompson came down unhurt. He rose, and away went the party, continuing the pursuit.

Some hours after one of the sentries, on the parapet, saw, as the moon came up, the dim outline of a sail far away at sea. It was not the one whose officers had been captured. That craft lay a league distant, while the one just discovered was far astern.

"Sail, 'O!" cried the sentry.

Marston was at his side in a moment, night-glass in hand. Before he could obtain a distinct view of the stranger, however, a fog, which had gradually been approaching, settled upon the water.

The captain was about moving off, when he thought he could see several dim forms, stealing along toward the fort.

"Who goes there?"

No response.

Marston hailed again. Still no reply.

"They are not Thompson and his party," said the captain.

"To ARMS! to ARMS!" he cried, in a voice that pealed like a cannon through the whole fort.

There was a yell as of a thousand demons, followed by a volley of musketry. Bullets whistled through the air; a shadow seemed to spring up on every hand, the rocks around the fort were alive with Algerines.

Marston had not gathered his little band around him when hundreds of Moors—sailors and soldiers—came pouring over the parapets.

The resistance they met with from their few opponents, although desperate, was but brief. The survivors of the Leopard's crew, now reduced to less than twenty, found themselves in the power of the Algerines.

The latter jeered at them, taunted them, beat them!

Mrs. Marston vainly pleaded in behalf of the poor fellows; the savage Moors scarcely heeded her.

Forcing his way through the ranks came one, who now made Inez shudder with dread on her husband's account. The new-comer was her father.

"I will look out that you play me no such trick again!" he said, seizing his daughter roughly by the shoulder.

That same night the captured ones were led into Algiers. All of them except Marston, who was again conveyed aboard the *Malo*, were sold as slaves to barbarous masters.

Inez was conducted to her father's house.

"Do you know what your fate is?" inquired her parent with a bitter smile.

"I care not, so you spare him—my husband, my poor, brave husband!"

"Well, then, I will tell you. You are to be married to Marco, aboard my vessel, at the very hour when the *Leopard's* captain swings at the yard-arm!"

Inez, completely worn out by her late excitement, uttered a scream and fell senseless.

Now let us see what became of Jack Thompson and his men. After the male adventure, they sped onward for several hours, when, hearing the tramp of many feet, they paused, crouching in the shrubbery to listen. Before long what seemed to be a whole army of Algerine soldiers and sailors glided stealthily past.

"It's done: the escaped prisoner has done his work!" growled the "Shrew" after the party had passed. "I'll go and alarm them in the fort though I die in the attempt!"

He was about speeding away, when his men detained him. They knew it would be useless; he could not persuade them to let him go.

While they were talking, half a dozen sailors, who had evidently followed behind the main body, sprung upon them, from the shrubbery. The little party, encouraged by the "Shrew," fought desperately; but numbers were against them and they were soon overpowered. Thompson and another man, however, succeeded in breaking away from their captors, who could not pursue them for fear of losing the others. The two men ran straight for the coast, which they soon reached. They crouched in the shrubbery, listened, and hearing nothing, continued on, creeping along in the shadow. Suddenly they found themselves at the spot where the two boats from which their Algerine prisoners had been taken, were concealed. The noise of the fighting above in

the fort now was plainly audible. Soon the din of conflict subsided and they knew by the heathen shouts they heard that the fort was recaptured.

They did what was best under the circumstances; shoved one of the boats in the water, after first staving a hole in the other, and pulled off, hoping that they might be so fortunate as to fall in with Decatur's fleet, hourly expected. They kept well in the shadow of the coast, until almost out of sight of the Algerine vessel off shore, when they pulled straight out to sea, and were soon hidden by the fog in the distance.

Then Thompson buried his face in his hands, sobbing outright.

"All my fault!" he groaned, "the loss of that fort! I would never have believed that a shadder could cause so much misery!"

The other man endeavored to cheer him, but in vain.

"It's no use!" cried the "Shadow." "It's all up with poor Marston, now, or if it isn't, it soon will be!"

His companion now put up the boat-sail, and the little craft went rippling slowly ahead.

Daylight was creeping upon the waters when both men heard the creaking of blocks and yards, right ahead.

"Hist! it may be an Algerine!" said Thompson, as his companion was about hailing.

Soon the masts of the vessel, coming through the mist, showed what she was—an Algerine sloop-of-war.

Thompson shifted his sail and luckily contrived, before being discovered, to sheer off.

The next moment the sloop was lost to view in the fog. In the course of an hour, a sail which Thompson at once pronounced to be an American, was seen looming through the mist.

An hour later the two men were picked up by the foremost vessel, which proved to be a United States frigate, one of the expected squadron.

"Well, my lads, you seem to have had hard times," said a firm, but pleasant-looking officer, advancing to the two men.

Perceiving that he wore the uniform of a commodore, the two at once doffed their hats, while they gave an account of what had happened.

The vessel at this time was running along in pursuit of the Algerine sloop; but the commodore, now quitting the two men, hastily advanced to the captain of the frigate and said a few words.

A minute later the boatswain's whistle rung through the frigate, quick orders were issued, and the ship, under every thing she could carry, was headed straight for Algiers.

"God grant that we may arrive in time to save Marston. If he is saved it will be a life-long happiness to one who is the most unfortunate shadder that ever breathed!"

The two men now ascertained that it was Decatur who had addressed them when they were first picked up.

"That is good!" exclaimed Thompson. "The commodore knows by what I told him that Marston is innocent of mutiny. Oh, if he's only saved, what a blessed shadder I'll be!"

The father of Inez had said that Marston would be executed at daylight, and he was resolved to keep his word. An hour before the time he was aboard his vessel with Inez, who beheld Marco, waiting to receive them. The preparations for the marriage and the execution had been made. The Algerine sailors wore a holiday costume; their dark faces were flushed with pleasure, as if they looked upon the marriage and the execution with one and the same feeling. A rope had been rove through a block at the mainyard-arm, with the fatal noose in one end—the men who were to haul upon the "standing" part, and the one who was to secure the noose stood ready.

Inez, surrounded by her father, Marco, and a number of officers from other vessels, stood, white and trembling—horror and grief upon her beautiful face, to be forced to witness the spectacle—the execution of her own husband.

The fore crew were ranged along the starboard side of the deck, their dark faces matching with red Fez caps, pushed back from their foreheads.

The Moroccan captain gave the signal. Marston was led up from below, between three sailors, holding drawn cutlasses, ready to cut him down if he should elude their grasp and attempt to escape. His face was grave but firm, his step proud, free and full of defiance. He glanced at his wife; her whole soul was in her eyes.

"My husband! my own!" she moaned, clasping her hands. "Father! oh, father, spare him, and to my dying day I will bless you!"

She had pleaded for her idol all night; her pleading was still vain.

"No!" he answered, sternly. "The dog must die! It will be but *one life for a thousand brave Moors whom he has slain!*"

Inez raised her eyes heavenward. Her whole face was lighted by a singular expression: her dark eyes seemed wild with supernatural fire!

She bounded from the grasp of her father; she threw her arms around her husband, clasping him with the strength of a vice.

"You shall not murder him!" she screamed; "if you do, you shall kill us both!"

Tighter and tighter grew her clasp: vainly the Moors endeavored to disengage it. The young wife seemed gifted with supernatural strength. Finally the Moors resorted to stratagem. One of them lifted his cimeter as if about to deal Marston a blow upon the head. Inez raised her hand to shield her husband, when his captors suddenly jerked him away, while the captain, throwing his arms around his daughter, held her firmly. Then the prisoner was dragged to the fatal noose, which was about to be slipped over his head, when the roaring of water was heard right to windward of the *Malo*, and Decatur's great frigate, bursting from the fog, came booming alongside of the Moorish craft, with her main-yard aback and the stars and stripes at her gaff.

"Hold there!" thundered Decatur, from the ship's quarter-deck, "or I'll sink you!"

The Moorish captain sprung into the waist.

"Quick, do your work!" he screamed to the man who held the suspended rope.

In an instant the noose was slipped over Marston's head.

"Haul!" was the order.

The dusky sailors were about obeying, when seventy or eighty blue-jackets, among them the *Shadow*, with the commodore himself at their head, sprung aboard the *Malo*, and, beating back the Algerines, made straight for the waist.

With one blow of his broadsword, Jack severed the rope attached to his captain, and throwing both arms around him, hugged him with a force which could hardly have been expected from a "mere Shadow."

"Safe, thank God!" exclaimed Thompson. "A happier snail than this here never breathed!"

The Moors, finding themselves outnumbered, made no resistance. The father of Inez, however, endeavored to force his daughter into a boat alongside.

Before he could do so, gallant Commodore Decatur was upon him, sword in hand.

"Release that woman, or you're a dead heathen!"

A moment later Inez was in the arms of her husband.

"Now, lads, three cheers!" exclaimed Decatur.

The cheers were given, after which Marston and his wife were conveyed on board the frigate.

Explanations followed.

Before night Decatur's other vessels came up, and were anchored in the harbor.

Next day Decatur forced the dey to an instant treaty. All American prisoners were to be given up, and the property taken from Americans restored or paid for.

Inez now was brimful of joy! Seated with her husband upon the quarter-deck, she spoke with joy of the happy moment when they should return to join their son, who, by this time, was probably at home in the care of kind Mrs. Stockton.

A few more words.

Inez and her husband arrived home in due time to find their little son as they had predicted, in the care of Mrs. Stockton. Mr. Marston obtained, in the navy, a commission commensurate with his great qualifications, and which enabled him to continue the nautical instructions he had already commenced to give little Harry.

Inez now was a happy woman. Her cheek glowed, and her eyes caught the sparkle of the old times. Other children were born to add to her happiness.

Jack Thompson, still following the sea, continued to visit the joyous couple. After mourning for his Polly so long, he married a second wife, who soon made him keep to himself

all tender reminiscences of the former one. He grew to be more of a shadow than ever, until finally he faded away entirely. Nevertheless, he enjoyed himself to the very last, after his own fashion, drinking, just before he died, a pint of grog, while he unconsciously expressed himself in verse :

“Here’s to that ’ere Poll of mine,
Which at last I’m goin’ to jine.”

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